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# THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS

WITH NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY

JOHN EDGAR McFADYEN, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND THEOLOGY,  
UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW

AUTHOR OF "OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,"  
"INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT," "THE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE," ETC.

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TO MY

DEAR AND TRUSTY FRIEND

REV. THOMAS ROWATT BROWN

*Printed in 1911*

## PREFACE

IT has often seemed to me that Biblical commentaries are not always as attractive as they might be. The scattered information given in the notes has to be carried back by the reader into the text, with the result that the interpretation often seems to suffer from a certain sense of jerkiness and lack of continuity. I have sought to obviate this by weaving into the course of the comment a translation of my own which stands out prominently in black lettering, and which can thus be conveniently compared with the familiar text of the Authorized Version which is printed at the top of the page, immediately above the commentary. The translation, running as it does through the continuous exposition, shows the reader how the words lie in the apostle's mind. It thus becomes easy for him to follow the sequence of an argument or to see the force of an appeal, without passing continually from the commentary to the text ; and the labour which this method has involved will be amply repaid, if it be found to add to the ease or the interest with which the epistles are read.

The volume does not attempt to say all that might be said, but only such things as seemed really to interpret the apostle's thought. Its object is to show how interesting, how vital, and how modern those ancient epistles are.

JOHN E. McFADYEN

PORT ELLEN, ISLAY,  
*August, 1911.*

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# FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS



# FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## INTRODUCTION

No book in the New Testament exhibits more graphically the magnitude and variety of the problems which Christianity had to face in its effort to subdue the ancient world to itself, than the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. Corinth was, in a very real sense, the meeting place of east and west, of their commerce and their thought. Of the brilliant and beautiful city, it has been said that "in her quickly pulsing life, in her luxury and vice, she may be described as the Paris of the ancient world." The atmosphere of Greece lies about the epistle : the eager mind is here that discusses and questions the resurrection (xv. 12), the spirit of faction is here that cursed the ancient democracies, and that now threatens to rend the church with party cries ; the large and tolerant outlook is here, and the deep and vivid interest in life and its problems.

In this city of art and commerce, of intellect and vice, there was a "church of God" (i. 2), founded by the apostle Paul (iii. 6). He claims to be the father of the Corinthian Christians, and they are his beloved children (iv. 14 f.). During the year and a half which he had spent at Corinth (Acts xviii. 11) "teaching the word of God among them," his evangelistic efforts had been crowned with a considerable measure of success (1 Cor. i. 4-7); and though

there, as everywhere, he had encountered bitter opposition from the Jews (Acts xviii. 6), yet not only Gentiles but Jews were won for the gospel, including even a ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 8, 1 Cor. i. 14). Naturally, however, the bulk of the converts were Gentile (1 Cor. xii. 2). Most of them were drawn from the lower classes, few were numbered among Corinth's wise or mighty or noble (i. 26); but doubtless there were a few. The graphic description of the celebration of the Lord's supper in xi. 20 ff. presupposes a variety of social conditions, and such a man as Stephanas (i. 16, xvi. 15) would probably be well off. Paul recognized the great strategic importance of Corinth. In the words of the vision, *Be not afraid* (Acts xviii. 9), we get a glimpse into the anxious emotion with which he began his labour; but the eighteen months which he spent there were rewarded by the rise of a church, whose members were rich in Christian "utterance and knowledge, and came behind in no gift" (i. 5 f.).

The work of Paul had been very ably seconded by Apollos; what Paul had planted, Apollos had watered (iii. 6). It is clear from i. 12 that Paul and Apollos impressed the Corinthians in very different ways. Apollos was a brilliant speaker, and, as an Alexandrian, no doubt a master of the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament (Acts xviii. 24 ff.), with which he confuted the Jews and proved that Jesus was the Messiah. On his arrival at Corinth, his influence began at once to tell powerfully: his eloquent and philosophic preaching would be more attractive to the average Greek, who worshipped "utterance and knowledge," than the simpler and more unadorned speech of Paul. To the credit of

both men, however, neither looked upon the other as a rival. They were both God's fellow-workers (iii. 9). Paul recognizes that "he that planteth and he that watereth are one" (iii. 8); and Apollos, who happens to be with Paul when he writes this letter to the Corinthians, refuses to take advantage of Paul's earnest request that he should visit Corinth with the brethren who are about to go (xvi. 12).

This letter was written from Ephesus (xvi. 8)—where Paul stayed between two and three years (Acts xix. 10, xx. 31) after leaving Corinth—and apparently towards the conclusion of his stay (Acts xix. 21, 1 Cor. xvi. 5). It is written at any rate before Pentecost (xvi. 8), perhaps about Easter (of 57 A.D.? ). There was constant intercourse between Ephesus and Corinth, and Paul is obviously thoroughly well informed of the Corinthian situation. His own letter is indeed, in part, a reply to a series of questions he had received from the Corinthians (vii. 1 ff.) regarding certain matters of practical importance : e.g. marriage and divorce, the partaking of the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice to idols (viii.-x.), (perhaps also whether women should be unveiled in the Christian assembly, xi.) the exercise of spiritual gifts (xii.-xiv.), the proper method of taking the collection for the poor of the Jerusalem church (xvi.). But Paul had other sources of information, some of which are named, others we are left to infer. Members of the household of Chloe brought him news of the divisions in the Corinthian church (i. 11). Through Apollos (xvi. 12) and Stephanas with his two companions (xvi. 17) he would be kept in touch with the situation. He "hears" how certain public services are being conducted (xi. 18), he knows

the rumours about the moral life of the church (v. 1), he is aware of what some people are saying about the resurrection of the dead (xv. 12). His own letter is written with an intimate knowledge of the situation—the first six chapters being suggested, roughly speaking, by the reports he has received, the other by the letter they had sent. He had already written a letter before this one which appears to have been, perhaps wilfully, misunderstood (v. 9) : and the present situation is serious enough to justify him in sending Timothy to Corinth in advance of himself (iv. 17, xvi. 10 f.), though whether Timothy reached Corinth or not is uncertain (cf. xvi. 10—*if*; and Acts xix. 22).

The two most conspicuous features of the Corinthian community were contentious intellectualism and immorality,—both features specially characteristic of decadent Greece; and in harmony with this is the opening emphasis on the ideal sanctity and unity of the church (i. 2). The low morality is very intelligible when we consider that Corinth was one of the great seats of the worship of Aphrodite, who had over a thousand priestesses in the city devoted to her immoral cult. It was at Corinth that Paul drew his dark picture of heathen morality in Rom. i. 18–32. After a terrible list of offenders against the divine law, beginning with fornicators and including thieves and drunkards, Paul goes on, “And such were some of you” (vi. 11)—a sentence which shows the tremendous task which Christianity had before it, and at the same time explains many of the unlovely features in the life of the church. Such men had to be spoken to as babes (iii. 1). Equally conspicuous, however, with their low morality, was

their intellectual conceit. Greece was the home of philosophy, and to the knowledge and wisdom of the Corinthians Paul makes many ironical allusions. Their knowledge "puffs them up" (viii. 1, cf. iv. 6, 18) and one effect of this conceit is to create a divisive spirit in the community. One man claims to belong to Paul, another to Apollos, another to Peter (i. 12; see note). These watchwords no doubt represent tendencies rather than parties. The eloquent Apollos would have his admirers; Paul, with his simpler gospel, would have his: the Petrine party probably represents a Palestinian type of piety—led perhaps by followers of Peter—of a narrower and less liberal type than that of Paul, *e.g.* in the matter of meat offered in sacrifice to idols. But despite the differences, there is no "schism" in the modern sense of the word: all together form the "church of God in Corinth."

The epistle gives us more than one interesting glimpse into the conduct of a religious service at Corinth (xi. 17 ff., xiv. 2 ff.). Here the rhetorical gifts of the Greeks would have ample scope, and there must have been some very effective speaking, when the secrets of the heart were manifest, and unbelievers were convinced that the presence of God was in the meeting (xiv. 24 f.). Often, however, an unbridled individualism must have reigned, which gives point to Paul's warning that the object of a public religious exercise is practically frustrated "unless *the other man* is edified" (xiv. 17). The natural mobility of the Greek temperament was heightened by its contact with the "spirit" of the new religion, and the most welcome manifestations of the spirit were the most sensational. The scenes

at the services must often have been disorderly (xiv.) and sometimes disgraceful (xi. 21 f.). The passionate and convincing exhortation of a prophet would be interrupted by the unintelligible speech of one who had the ecstatic gift of tongues. The gifts often contributed to display rather than to edification, and the worship seemed to be that of a God not of peace, but of confusion ; so much so that an ignorant or uncharitable stranger stepping into the meeting would at certain moments be inclined to believe that the worshippers were mad (xiv. 23). Even the women, smitten with the emancipating spirit of the new religion, were beginning to forget the decorum which every self-respecting Greek woman was expected to observe in public (xi. 5 ff.).

Only a man of unusual versatility would have been able to deal effectively with such a situation as that presented by Corinth. The problems which clamoured for solution were both practical and speculative. Out of the confusion presented by those vivid and complex elements of Greek life, a world of order had to be created ; and the nimble Greek intellect would expect to be satisfied with a speculative solution of its difficulties. In both these directions the greatness of Paul is manifest, and he more than justifies his claim to be all things to all men (ix. 22)—a Greek to the Greeks no less than a Jew to the Jews. In this connection, the collocation of chs. xv. and xvi. is very striking. As at Athens (Acts xvii. 32) so at Corinth, difficulties were felt about the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 12). In an argument of much power and eloquence, which shows his great constructive intellect, Paul answers those difficulties, and then in the very next breath,

begins to deal in the most practical way with the question of the collection (xvi.). The early days of Christianity needed a great organizing genius—one who could organize thoughts and affairs and men—and such a man they found in Paul.

Yet he would not himself have spoken of genius, but of grace; it was by the grace of God that he was what he was, and did what he did (xv. 10). In this epistle we get a few glimpses of his unique career. He thinks with sorrow of the days in which he persecuted the church of God (xv. 9), but by the infinite grace of that God whose church he had persecuted he is now an apostle—indeed an apostle by a triple right: first, because he has seen the Lord (ix. 1, cf. xv. 8); secondly, because his work has been crowned with success (ix. 2); lastly, because he has suffered for Jesus' sake. The last argument is elaborated in the second epistle, but this epistle also describes the hardships which he had to bear for the gospel's sake—hungry and thirsty, naked and bruised, hunted and doomed, a spectacle to men and angels (iv. 9–13). His mission in life is to preach—that is why he was “sent” (i. 17); and this he does with passion but with simplicity, without rhetorical or philosophical devices (i. 17, ii. 1), though he is well aware how dear these are to the Corinthian heart. This does not mean, of course, that Paul has no theological construction to offer of the Christian facts. The facts are no doubt of unique importance (xv. 1–8, xi. 23 ff.), but the discussion of the resurrection shows how ready and competent Paul was to present a constructive interpretation of those facts in terms of contemporary thought. There is no little irony in his disclaimer

of "wisdom" on his own part, and his acknowledgement of the wisdom of the Corinthians (cf. iv. 10, etc.). At the same time, in the eyes of Greeks, his gospel of a crucified Messiah was foolishness, and he made no attempt to commend it by excusing it or by dressing it in the language of philosophy. He held plainly before the eyes of the Corinthians (i. 23) as of the Galatians (Gal. iii. 1) the figure of Christ upon the cross. That was the gospel, and "woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (ix. 16). The resurrection is no doubt the other half of the gospel, and of no less importance (xv. 14). But to Paul, neither has any meaning apart from the other: it was the crucified Christ who rose. The one doctrine offended Greek pride, the other Greek scepticism; but the Christian religion, as Paul understood it, turns upon them, and he presses them both home in his preaching with inflexible persistency. The ambition of his life is that he may never, by any word or deed of his, cause any hindrance to this gospel of Christ (ix. 12), and that by all means he may save some (ix. 22). It is never his own profit that he seeks, but always "the profit of the many, that they may be saved" (x. 33).

This salvation is not simply an other-worldly thing: this epistle is a fine illustration of how it affects the whole range of human affairs. The great principles of the Gospel are here applied to the problems of ordinary life. The letter has been aptly described by Findlay as "the epistle of the cross in its social application," and by Sabatier as "the expansion of the Christian principle as it spreads into the sphere of practical affairs." Its influence upon society is primarily not revolutionary, but transforming: let

each man abide in the calling wherein he was called (vii. 20)—transformed, because he abides with God (vii. 24). Less directly, but hardly less powerfully than the epistle to the Galatians does this epistle emphasize the liberty that is ours in Christ. “All things are lawful” (vi. 12, x. 23); but the use which may be made of this liberty will depend upon the effect it may have upon others. It must not become a stumbling-block to the weak (viii. 9, x. 32). Conduct, whether in the church or in the world, should be governed by the law of edification (x. 23), which is only another name for the law of love: for it is the function of love to build up (viii. 1). In all things, every Christian man is to seek the glory of his God (x. 31), and the good of his neighbour: as a member of a corporate body, he must never fail to consider “the other man.” “Let no man seek his own good, but the good of the other man” (x. 24; cf. xiv. 17).

Especially must this law of love hold in the church, among those that are of the household of faith (Gal. vi. 10). They come together to worship God, and to help one another—not for the worse, but for the better (xi. 17). The test of the value of a religious service is its power to “edify,” to build up the worshippers. If “the other man is not edified” (xiv. 17) by the exercise, then we may well ask what is its value and place in the church. Spiritual gifts are of many kinds, but love must determine how they shall be exercised (xii. 28 ff.) and in any case the most helpful are the most desirable. Into his wonderful eulogy of love, which Alford describes as “perhaps the noblest assemblage of beautiful thoughts in beautiful language extant in this our world,” the apostle pours the fulness of his heart (xiii.). This conception of the church as

a body with members, every one of which is necessary to the welfare of the whole, and every one of which needs every other, is worked out with great suggestiveness (xiv.).

Sometimes Paul's teaching is coloured by his views of the near coming of Christ. The fact that the time is short, appears, for example, to influence his discussion of marriage (vii. 26-29, cf. x. 11). But in any case the eschatological background of the epistle does not interfere with our direct appropriation of its teaching. In its protest against discord and faction and its plea for holiness and unity within the church, in its emphasis upon bodily purity and the maintenance of an inexorable moral standard in matters affecting the relations of the sexes, in its fine combination of tolerance for all that is not inimical to the spirit of Christianity with practical consideration for the brother whom that tolerance might mislead, in its lofty sense of the place and power of public worship and of the obligation of each member of the Christian community to contribute to the good of the whole, in its emphatic assertion of the resurrection, and in the supreme place which it assigns to love, the message of the epistle is immortal. The light of the world to come is shed back upon the world that now is. While bracing its readers to face their earthly problems and do their earthly duties, it holds steadily before their eyes the great consummation of history, when all things shall have been subjected to the Son, and God shall be all in all (xv. 28).

# THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## CHAPTER I

I PAUL called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother.

---

*The Greeting (i. 1-3).*

PAUL, BY DIVINE VOCATION, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST,  
AND BROTHER SOSTHENES,  
TO THE CHURCH OF GOD AT CORINTH,  
WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED THROUGH UNION  
WITH CHRIST JESUS, AND WHO ARE THEREFORE SAINTS BY  
VOCATION :

AND NOT TO YOU ONLY, BUT TO ALL WHO ANYWHERE CALL  
UPON THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THEIR  
LORD AS WELL AS OURS :

TO ALL OF YOU BE GRACE AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER  
AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

i. Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent by Him and sent to proclaim Him. That was the work of his life from his conversion, and it is in his capacity as an apostle that he writes to the Corinthians. But he has not sought this task of himself : he was called to it by an express act of the will of God. His words will therefore have special weight. There are many unlovely features in the conduct of the Corinthian church which will call for grave reproof, and the claim Paul makes in these words to be divinely called to his apostleship justifies in advance the authority with which he will subsequently speak. It was all the more necessary to throw this well into the forefront, as some of the Corinthians appear to have challenged or depreciated his apostleship. *Am I not an apostle? (ix. 2).*

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours :

---

2. And Paul associates with himself **Sosthenes**, whom he calls **the brother**. Who this man was, we cannot be sure, as the name was not uncommon : it is not impossible that he is to be identified with the ruler of the synagogue mentioned in Acts xviii. 17. If, as has been conjectured, he was converted, after the departure of Paul from Corinth, by the preaching of Apollos, there would be a peculiar propriety about the mention of him here, considering the party spirit which existed in Corinth, and which Paul takes a very early opportunity of rebuking (ver. 12). Apollos was no rival, and his converts Paul regarded as friends. In any case, Sosthenes must have been a person of some importance, and the naming of him at the beginning of the letter, rather than at the end, and in immediate conjunction with Paul's own name, shows that he is not to be regarded as a mere amanuensis, but that he shared, if not in the composition of the letter (1st pers. sing. is used in i. 4, 10 ; plu. in ver. 23), at any rate in its sentiments.

The letter is addressed **to the church of God**, the *ecclesia*, which had been *called* by God *out of* the world, and which belonged to Him. The church includes *all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place*, but it has also local centres ; and the specific destination of this letter is the church **which exists** and flourishes in Corinth. The church of God in Corinth ! the words seem like a contradiction or a dream. Corinth, the home of idolatry and immorality, an immorality more unblushing perhaps than in any other part of Greece ; yet the church of God is there. Again, that church is very far from being what it should be : Paul has to censure repeatedly and earnestly its disputatious spirit and its low ideals. All the more remarkable, therefore, are the chaste and lofty words in which he proceeds to describe the Corinthian church. It consists of men **who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus**, that is, who have been separated from the world, and made holy, not so much by Him as *in* Him, that is, through abiding in Him. And just as Paul was called to his apostleship, so they are no

3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

less really called to this life of holiness. Considering the real state of the Corinthian church, as disclosed by this epistle, Paul's repeated emphasis on its holiness sounds strange ; but we have to remember that he is speaking here of the church as a whole, not of individual members, and again that he is contemplating the church on its ideal side. Despite its grave blemishes, it does not cease to be a church, so long as its members are in some real sense, *in* Christ.

It is singular, but no doubt intentional, that Paul should not extend his greetings to the Corinthian church alone, but that he associates with that church all who in any place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first rebuke that Paul administers is to the sectional and party spirit of the Corinthians (vv. 10 ff.). Here he, as it were, admonishes them in advance and by implication, gently reminding them that the church, which they were dismembering by their divisions, was a great and impressive unity, with a scope and a membership far beyond themselves, and that it embraced all who acknowledged the lordship of Jesus. To make this point still more plain, he adds, *theirs and ours*. Some take this phrase with the word place—*in every place, theirs and ours* ; but this is tame. The meaning seems rather to be, *their Lord and ours* ; and the phrase is a delicate reminder that the one Jesus is Lord of all.

3. The names of the writers and of the people addressed are followed by the greeting proper : Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is the loving favour of God, which issues in peace for the men who are conscious of it. To a church torn by internal dissensions, this initial prayer for peace would be specially appropriate. The ultimate source of this grace and peace is divine : it can only come from God and Jesus Christ. It is very significant that these two names can be thus set together under the government of a single preposition. This co-ordination of the names is a subtle, but significant evidence that Paul conceived of Jesus as occupying an altogether unique relation to God.

Incidentally, one cannot help noticing in this section (a) the importance attached to a divine call. It is the consciousness of

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ ;

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge ;

---

his call to be an apostle that gives to Paul's career its unity, and to his words their authority : similarly the life-work of any man may be done with concentration and enthusiasm if it be begun and continued in the inspiration of such a call. And again (b) there are here suggested the marks of a true church. Its members are men who are sanctified by union with Jesus Christ, who acknowledge Him as Lord, and the aim of whose life is holiness.

*Paul expresses his gratitude for the gifts of grace enjoyed by the Corinthian Christians (i. 4-9).*

4, 5. Paul begins, as is his custom, with a note of thanksgiving ; and so utterly selfless is his life, that his recorded thanksgivings are nearly always expressions of gratitude for what God has done *for others*—as here, **I thank God continually concerning you** (ver. 4). This introductory expression of his solemn joy in the Corinthian church is peculiarly skilful and tactful, as so much of the subsequent letter is occupied with reproof of their shortcomings : he wins their good will at the outset by his frank recognition of their Christian attainments. He was grateful **because of the grace of God which was given to you in Christ Jesus—not by Jesus**, as A.V. reads: this is to miss the truth that the grace was dependent upon union with Him. What Paul precisely means by *grace* is made plain by the next clause : (**I mean**), that in **everything ye were enriched in Him** (ver. 5)—union with Christ had expanded and enriched their nature, especially **in utterance of every kind and knowledge of every kind**: that is, it had touched and quickened their natural powers of expression and insight. The Greeks had for centuries been famous as speakers and thinkers, and the influence of Christ is manifest in the new power that has come to them in both those directions ; they have a richer power of apprehending truth, and of expressing the truth they apprehend. Or perhaps it is significant that Paul speaks here in the past

6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you :

7 So that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ :

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

---

tense : the gift *was* given, and they *were* enriched. The present condition of the church leaves much to be desired, as we see from the immediate sequel ; and it is perhaps ominous that Paul puts speech before knowledge. The glib-tongued, nimble-witted Greeks were ever ready for an argument.

6-8. You were enriched, says Paul, **inasmuch as the testimony concerning Christ**, that is, the gospel, **was confirmed among you or in you**—whether that confirmation took some external form as, *e.g.* of miracles wrought by the spirit (cf. Gal. iii. 5), or showed itself as deep inner conviction and new or quickened spiritual powers: the words that follow perhaps rather suggest the latter interpretation. So the consequence of this confirmation was **that there is no endowment of grace in which you feel yourselves behind**. But this consciousness could only be maintained by fixing their hearts upon the better thing beyond, upon the full *unveiling* of Christ when He should come again : so to this they earnestly looked forward, **patiently awaiting the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (ver. 7). And this same Jesus Christ in whom they had been sanctified and enriched in the past, is He **who will also** for the future **confirm you**, even till the end of this dispensation (that is, till He comes again), and will ensure **that no charge be laid against you in the day of our Lord Jesus (Christ)** when He comes in judgment—a phrase modelled on the Old Testament *day of the LORD* or Jehovah. The *who* at the beginning of ver. 8 has been referred by some to God, on the ground that, if it referred to Christ, its immediate antecedent, the sentence would more naturally end *in his day* instead of *in the day of our Lord Jesus*. But against this, it has to be noticed that, in these opening verses, the name of the Lord Jesus occurs ten times, obviously repeated with deliberate and solemn emphasis : more probably therefore the *who* refers, as it most naturally does, to Christ.

9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

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9. Paul is sure that Christ, till and at His coming, will do all this for the Corinthian Christians, because God is faithful. He is true to Himself, to His purpose, to those whom He calls. It was through Him ye were called. His purpose in calling you cannot be frustrated ; and obedience to the call has brought you into the fellowship of His son, Jesus Christ our Lord : that is, the fellowship established by and centring in Him, so that they share the life which He lives and the blessings which He has procured. They, in their measure, will be, like Him, sons of God and heirs of heavenly glory. In part, this fellowship is already realized, for are they not sanctified and enriched in Him ? and its full fruition is sure, because God is faithful.

This is a tender and beautiful introduction to the earnest words of reproof which are to follow. Before dealing with their shortcomings, the apostle gratefully acknowledges before God the many gifts and graces which the Corinthians owe to Christ, assures them of His power to keep them free from charge on the great day of judgment, and rests his confidence for the future on the fidelity of God. His glance sweeps across the years from the day when they were called to be saints to that other day when they shall stand unimpeached and blameless. Then, from this inspiring vision of the past and future, he turns abruptly to the less lovely present.

## THE APOSTLE'S REBUKE OF THE SPIRIT OF FACTION (i. 10-iv. 21)

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you ; but *that ye* be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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### *The Corinthian Parties (vv. 10-17).*

10. **But, brethren, I appeal to you.** The tone changes : a note of warning and reproof begins to be struck. But in his severity, Paul does not forget to be courteous. Though the charge he is about to bring against the Corinthians is a serious one, they are still his *brethren*. But he is in deadly earnest ; and he solemnly beseeches them **by** the name of Him in whom they are sanctified, and into whose fellowship they have been called—that august name which he has already repeated ten times, **the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, the one Lord of all who call upon Him, and in whom they are all one (ver. 10). They are indeed one—ideally at least—but they act as if they were a group of parties, each with its party sentiments and party cry : so Paul exhorts them in the name of their common Lord, **that ye say the same thing, one and all of you.** As it was, they were saying different things : one was saying, “I am of Paul,” another, “And I of Apollos ;” and the unity that ought to mark the church was being imperilled or destroyed by the spirit of schism. The positive exhortation to *say the same thing* is expressed negatively in the next clause, **and that there be no divisions among you.** *σχίσμα* (schism) is the word used in Mark ii. 21 for a rent in a piece of cloth. It is as if the fair garment of the church were being rent in pieces. In a Christian church there ought to be no rent ; or if there be, it ought to be repaired and adjusted without delay. In the verb *κατηρτισμένοι* the metaphor of the rent is kept up. I beseech

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house of Chloe*, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I

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you that there be no schisms, but rather that ye be well adjusted together in a common outlook and a common judgment: literally, *in the same mind and the same judgment or opinion*. There should be a unity, Paul urges, among the members of the church both in general mental disposition, and in their judgments of particular things: and there will be this unity, if they give Christ, by whose name he beseeches them, his true place as Lord.

11. Paul is not making his charge merely on hearsay: his sources of information are reliable and he is not afraid to mention them. **For with regard to you it has been made plain to me, my brethren, by the representatives of Chloe.** Notice again (cf. ver. 10), the courtesy and tact with which he prefaches his formal charge **that there are contentions among you** with the acknowledgment that they are his *brethren*. The *contentions* explain the *divisions*. Some such vague word as *representatives* is necessary to translate the vague Greek phrase "*those of Chloe*," as we have no means of knowing whether they were children, servants, or agents. We do not even know who Chloe was or to what city she belonged. Clearly she was some one who carried weight with the Corinthians, as Paul does not expect the testimony of her representatives to be challenged. She appears to have been a woman either of Corinth or of Ephesus, the city in which Paul wrote—more probably Ephesus, as Corinthian evidence on the state of parties at Corinth would have been open to suspicion. In that case, Chloe's representatives, whoever they were, must have spent some time in Corinth.

12. Paul at once proceeds to make his meaning perfectly clear. **What I mean, he says, is this.** Every one of you is taking sides. One is saying, I belong to Paul; another, I to Apollos; another, I to Peter; another, I to Christ. This partisan spirit in the church must have seemed to Paul a matter of grave and even vital importance, as he puts it in the very forefront of his letter. Many questions gather round this

am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ.

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famous verse. Were there four parties in Corinth or three (omitting *I am of Christ* as the gloss of a copyist, or even an aside of Paul himself) or were there only two—that of Paul and Apollos embracing the Gentile Christians, that of Peter and Christ embracing the Jewish Christians ? Were these groups parties at all in the ordinary sense of the word ? Did they differ essentially in doctrine—that of Paul and Apollos, for example—or was the preference of the members personal rather than doctrinal ? What was the Christ party ? It would be very natural for converts to regard with special affection the man who had brought to them the knowledge of Christ, and there would be a tendency to regard his presentation of the gospel as exhaustive and exclusive. This tendency would in certain cases become a fact, the moment another presentation entered the field. After the departure of Paul from Corinth, the brilliant Apollos had appeared, and there would be little wonder if his eloquence, and philosophy too perhaps, had dazzled a people who had ever been fond of oratorical display ; and it would be very natural if, in the eyes of some, he had overshadowed the apostle whose ambition was to present his message with simplicity rather than with eloquence. Doubtless the average Corinthian would have been more impressed by Apollos than by Paul ; and while those who, under God, owed their soul to Paul, would be faithful to him and accept the gospel in the form in which he had presented it, there would be others who preferred Apollos and his presentation of it. Thus the difference between these two groups, though probably personal rather than doctrinal, was thoroughly real and bade fair to be serious.

But real as this difference was, it was less radical than that between either of these parties and the other two. Paul and Apollos stood together for Gentile Christianity : the party of Peter—or Cephas, as he is always (except in Gal. ii. 7, 8) called in the Pauline epistles (cf. Gal. ii. 9)—represented rather Jewish Christianity : the very word *Cephas* on Greek lips suggests Palestinian origin. This party probably adopted a stricter attitude to the law, and would include Jews and Greek proselytes who had connected themselves with the synagogue. The nature of the

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

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Christ party is more difficult to determine. Little light can be gained from 2 Cor. x. 7, as those who there boast to be "of Christ" are not necessarily the same as those alluded to here. The nucleus of this party may have been some of those who had seen the Lord (xv. 5), or it may simply have consisted of those whose watchword was "Back to Christ," back beyond His human ministers to the Lord Himself. But to make this a party cry, to bring Him into competition with Paul, Apollos and Peter, to claim for a single sect the monopoly, as it were, of Christ, was to be guilty of the worst sectarianism of all: it was, as a Greek father said, to place the Master and His servants upon the same level. Christ is over all and belongs to all, "their Lord and ours" (ver. 2).

13. As Paul considers these parties, whose cries are ringing in his ears, his soul is stirred with holy indignation. **Has Christ been divided?** he impetuously asks. This sentence may also be translated affirmatively—*Christ is then divided!*—but as a question it is much more vigorous and dramatic, and the absence of such a *μή* as introduces the next question is no objection. Christ belonged to the whole church—*ye are Christ's*, iii. 23—here He was being claimed by a section of it. Or it seemed as if Christ were *made into shares*—the Christ as expounded by Paul different from the Christ expounded by Apollos or Peter. This partisan spirit was perilous in two directions: it distracted attention from the central facts—from Christ, His work, and in particular His cross, which Paul immediately mentions; and by emphasizing the church leaders, it leads to glorying in men, instead of in the Lord (ver. 31).

Nothing could more strikingly illustrate the unique and central importance attached by Paul to the cross of Christ than the position he assigns it here. Immediately after the mention of Christ comes the mention of his cross. **Was it Paul that was CRUCIFIED for you?**—and the next section (vv. 18–25) is entirely devoted to a discussion of the cross. Of all the facts in the earthly career of Christ, this was the most significant; and the thought of it, had it held the place in the Corinthian mind to which it was entitled, would have rendered all dissension at once unseemly and impossible. It was not a mere death,

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Ste-

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but a death for them. He was crucified *for you*—and Paul rejects with horror the thought that he or Apollos or Peter or any one but Christ could have attained the lonely distinction of “dying for our sins,” as it is put in xv. 3.

It is noteworthy that Paul here singles out the cross and baptism as the two things that give Christ His exclusive claim to the allegiance of the Corinthian Christians—His being crucified for them and their baptism into His name : **or was it into the name of Paul that ye were baptized?** The name of no church leader was in any way implicated in the baptismal formula ; consequently the recognition which these leaders received in the party cry was absurd and scandalous. Apparently the longer Trinitarian formula of Mat. xxviii. 19 was not yet in use, and baptism was simply into the name of Christ.

**14-16.** At this point it occurs to Paul that it is a matter to be thankful for that he has, in his ministry among them, confined himself so strictly to preaching, and that he had so seldom baptized. Thus the last shred of justification for their regarding him as a party leader vanished. **I am thankful**, he says (some MSS. add **to God**), **that not one of you did I baptize except Crispus**, a former ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 8), and **Gaius**, “probably a rich freedman, to whom the honourable duty of entertaining the guests of the Church was assigned (Rom. xvi. 23)” (Ramsay in *Expositor*, Feb., 1900, p. 101). Ver. 15—“lest any one should say, etc.”—reads as if Paul had deliberately refrained from baptizing to prevent people from misconstruing his motive. This of course is not his meaning : he is merely expressing his gratitude at the Providence which, all unconsciously to himself, he now sees to have been watching over his ministry, keeping him, as an almost invariable rule, from baptizing his converts, so **that none of you is able to say that it was into my name that you were baptized** (ver. 15). Then as an afterthought—perhaps suggested by Stephanas himself (xvi. 15, 17)—he remembers **I also baptized the household of**

phanas : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach

Stephanas : if there be any other beside—and he thinks there are none—I do not remember them.

17. The whole tone of the references to baptism shows that, though Paul regards the rite as of great importance (ver. 13) he does not lay any stress upon his particular administration of it. **For it was not to baptize that Christ sent me, but to tell the good news.** The words ἀπέστειλέν με Χριστός recall the ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ of ver. 1. This then was the object of his calling to the apostleship—not to administer sacraments, but to preach. Here Paul glides subtly and almost insensibly into his second charge against the Corinthian Church—their love of rhetorical and philosophical display, which tended to make them misunderstand or deprecate the message of the cross. His message is to preach, but the preaching has to be **not in wisdom of word.** Probably *wisdom* here refers as much to the form as to the substance of the presentation : in either case he puts his finger upon one of the weak spots in the Greek nature. In preaching, he made no effort to be a *clever speaker*, as we might paraphrase the words—he was too much in earnest, and had too solemn a theme in the cross for that : nor did he make any attempt to *philosophize*—an idea also suggested by the Greek words. His plainness of speech appears even to have alienated some of the expectant Corinthians (2 Cor. x. 10) ; and probably in this repudiation of the *wisdom of word*, there is a latent criticism of the ideals of the Apollos party.

We have already seen (ver. 13) how central the cross must have been in the preaching of Paul : here again, and quite incidentally, it is made plain that for him the essence of the gospel is the story of the cross. For the reason he assigns for avoiding the wisdom of words in his preaching, is **lest the cross of Christ be deprived of its effect**—literally, emptied, depleted, like a vessel, of its content. The “clever or subtle speaking,” which is always deplorable in a preacher, becomes a sort of blasphemy, when his theme is the cross ; it distracts the attention from the great fact and deprives the message of its power over the heart. It is also worthy of note that Paul speaks

the gospel : not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

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here not of the cross of Jesus, but of *Christ* : the crucified one is the Messiah, “the risen and exalted Lord.” The phrase *the cross of Christ* is reserved for the emphatic place at the end—“that there be no emptying of the cross of Christ.”

The tension under which Paul writes is shown by the rapidity with which he plunges into the discussion of the parties in the Corinthian church, and by the directness and impetuosity of the discussion. We are not to suppose that the unity of the church was absolutely wrecked by this partisan spirit ; as yet it was only imperilled, though gravely imperilled. But it was still possible for “the whole church” to come together (xiv. 23), so that, in a real sense, though one party claims to be specifically Christ’s (ver. 12), they are all Christ’s (iii. 23). Still this emphasis upon human leadership, upon some specific and individual interpretation of the gospel, is ever a serious menace to the unity of the church of Christ. Doubtless beneath all ecclesiastical, historical and doctrinal differences, there is a real unity ; but even that is imperilled when these differences are accentuated. So long as men are governed by the Protestant impulse to think with courage and independence, they will often differ, especially where the evidence is meagre, and capable of manifold interpretation : but the difference must not be exaggerated, it must be accompanied by the recognition of its relative unimportance, it must be seen in the light of the larger unity in Christ.

It is pathetic to think that even the Lord’s supper, which, more than anything else, is fitted to be a bond of union for those who love Him, should have so often proved to be a point of separation. “I am of Luther,” “I am of Zwingli”—cries like these nearly jeopardized the unity of the Reformation ; and to-day—though this is less and less the case—the names of Calvin and Wesley divide large branches of the Christian church. There is no more important lesson for the modern church, confronted with the stupendous problem of the evangelization of the world, than that which Paul urges here so powerfully—to sink all differences in the recognition of the

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness ; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

supreme allegiance which all alike owe to Christ, who was crucified for them, and into whose name they were baptized.

*The Folly and the Wisdom of the Cross (i. 18-25).*

18. The cross, as we have seen, was central to the preaching of Paul. He fears and shuns subtle discourse, "wisdom of word," because of its power to obscure the cross (ver. 17). Yet to the great majority of those who first heard the gospel, Jews and Greeks alike, the cross was a hopelessly unintelligible riddle : it was the crucifixion of their most cherished beliefs and hopes. *For the story of the cross is folly in the eyes of those who are perishing* (ver. 18)—not simply, those who are destined to perish : the idea rather is that those who reject that story as silly, *are perishing* in virtue of their rejection, and will continue to perish so long as they reject it. The road to destruction is to count the story of Christ's cross a foolish one : but there are others to whom it proves itself nothing less than *a divine power*. *To those who are being saved—and such are we—it is the power of God*. There is a fine balance about this sentence (*τοῖς μὲν . . . τοῖς δέ*) : we may draw fine shades of distinction between men, but ultimately and essentially there are only two classes, and these are determined by their attitude to Christ and His cross—*those who are being lost*, those who think the story silly, and *those who are being saved*, those who find that it speaks to them with divine power. Paul speaks for this group out of the depths of an experience which he knows they share ("to those who are being saved, even to us ;" *τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν*). The natural contrast to foolishness would be *wisdom* (cf. ver. 25) : Paul, however, deliberately uses *power* here to suggest that the story has vindicated itself as a mighty, saving fact. This is the practical proof of its wisdom.

19. There is nothing unusual about this issue of worldly

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

wisdom in destruction : it is part of the divine government of the world and is attested by the Hebrew Scriptures. For it stands in Scripture (perf. tense.) : “ I will cause the wisdom of the wise to perish (note the echo in ἀπολῶ of ἀπολλυμένους) and the discernment of the discerning I will reduce to nothing”—in the original passage the last word is *I will hide* (Isaiah xxix. 14). This appeal to the Old Testament is very characteristic : this section must have been a favourite, as the previous verse is quoted by our Lord in Matt. xv. 8. In the original passage, the reference is to the political schemes by which the Jews hoped to save themselves from the Assyrians. The New Testament writers, as a rule, care little for the original context, and they apply the passages they quote more generally, or refer them definitely to the situation in their own day.

20. Worldly wisdom, whether of the Jews or Greeks, leads nowhere, or only to destruction. For where is your philosopher? where is your scribe? where is your worldly controversialist? (literally, *where is the disputer of this age?*) Here again we have a reminiscence of Isaiah xix. 11 f. and xxxiii. 18. Some regard σοφός as a general term, which is subdivided into the Jewish γραμματεύς (scribe) and the Greek συνζητητής. But, whether the last term be an allusion to Greek or Jew,—and it may equally well be Jew (Acts vi. 9)—it seems more natural in a passage ridiculing the Corinthian σοφία, to refer σοφός to the Greek, and γραμματεύς, of course, to the Jew. Where were these philosophers and scribes? asks Paul, and he answers by implication, Nowhere. All their philosophies amounted to nothing when it came to an interpretation of the mind of God, especially as illustrated in the cross of Christ : for did God not turn the wisdom of the world into folly? Jew and Greek alike failed to understand and appreciate the most stupendous, if mysterious, fact of history—the cross of Christ ; therefore they and their systems stood convicted of folly. Theirs was a wisdom of the world, the κόσμος, that is, the material world : such worldly wisdom was incompetent to interpret the spiritual world,

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ;

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21. Since then, in the wisdom of God, the world, by its wisdom, had attained no real knowledge of God : it is not quite certain what is meant by *in the wisdom of God*—whether that this incompetence on the part of the world is part of a wise, divine plan, or that by the wisdom of God is meant the revelation in the pre-Christian world, to the Jews in Scripture, to the Greeks in nature : the former interpretation seems the more natural. But since in either case *the world knew not God*, and He was desirous that it should have a saving knowledge of Him, He graciously determined, by means of this foolish message of the cross (literally, “by the foolishness of the message”) to save those who believed it. With much emphasis *τοὺς πιστεύοντας* is reserved to the end : it is those who believe it who are saved, those who count it silly only succeed in perishing.

22, 23. The Jews and the Greeks represent the two great outstanding attitudes to the problem of life : together, in a sense, they exhaust *the world* (ver. 21) which, by its wisdom, failed to find God. Hence Paul here divides the world into these two great categories, and suggests why they went astray in their search : Jews demand signs and Greeks are in search of wisdom. To both (*kai . . . kai*) the plain message of the cross is unconvincing. As in the time of Jesus, the Jews demanded a sign (Matt. xvi. 1, Mark viii. 11 f.) : then they might believe. They were moving in the region of externals : a spiritual message needs no external authentication. The Greeks, on the other hand, were animated by a philosophical spirit, and this alone would never lead to the cross. But in contradiction to the Jews, with their externalism, and the Greeks with their philosophy, WE preach Christ as cru-

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than

cified.<sup>1</sup> Though Paul speaks in the context of his own mission (i. 17) and method (ii. 2) no doubt by *we* here he means to include others besides himself : he was not alone—probably Apollos and others were with him—in proclaiming Christ as crucified. We preach *Christ* : how personal this sounds as against the abstractions of Greek philosophy! It is not a system, but a man, who has to be presented by the preacher. And that man *crucified!* (*ἐσταυρωμένον*, perf. part. : the crucifixion is not merely a historic event [aor.] but an eternal fact, at any rate a fact of eternal consequences). *A crucified Messiah!* Here was the real offence, an offence to both the types that exhaust the world (*μέν . . . δε*)—**to Jews a stumbling-block, to Gentiles folly.** Here Paul strikes at the root of the matter. All earnest religious men were longing, more or less consciously, for salvation ; but that that should come through a crucified man was incredible, ridiculous, to Jew and Greek alike. “He that is hanged is accursed of God,” said the Jew (Deut. xxi. 23) ; besides, the Messiah was to come in regal splendour and as conqueror. Little wonder that a crucified Messiah was a *stumbling-block to the Jews. To the Gentiles—the Greeks and the Romans—such a gospel was equal folly* : the horror with which the Romans regarded the cross receives graphic expression in the words of Cicero : “Away with the very name of cross, not only from the bodies of citizens of Rome, but even from their thoughts, their eyes, their ears.”

24, 25. To the world at large, the cross might be a stumbling-

<sup>1</sup> The grammar of vv. 22, 23 is a little difficult. Probably ver. 23 is not to be regarded as the principal clause, of which ver. 22 is the subordinate : “Since the Jews ask a sign, etc. . . . we preach Christ” : for the former fact is not the reason for Paul’s preaching Christ. But rather vv. 22–24 are to be taken as amplifying v. 21 : “Since, that is, the Jews ask a sign . . . while we preach Christ.”

men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men

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block and a folly : but to those that are actually called (literally, *to the called themselves*)—and these embraced both Jews and Greeks—this crucified Christ is divine power and divine wisdom incarnate. When truly understood, He can meet both the Jewish demand for a sign, and the Greek demand for wisdom. Upon His cross, He is the embodiment at once of the might and the wisdom of God. There is something very impressive in the rhythmic repetition of Θεοῦ (God) before δύναμις (power) and σοφίαν (wisdom), and in the stately balance of the next sentence. The frequent repetition of Θεοῦ (God) in these verses is designed to suggest that we are here dealing with the inscrutable things of God. **For this weak and foolish policy**, as it may seem, of salvation by the cross (note that τὸ μωρὸν and τὸ ἀσθενές are concrete), **seeing that it is divine—it is God's policy (twice over)—is wiser and stronger than men**, and all that they can do or devise.

To appreciate this passage properly, it must not be forgotten that it is pervaded by a delicate irony. Paul hurls the shafts of his fine ridicule at the Greek *σοφία* (wisdom) ; but it would be unjust to infer from this that what he calls in ver. 18 the “message” or the “story of the cross” is simply to be accepted as a fact, without any attempt being made to correlate it with other facts or to find a place for it in a theological scheme. Every thoughtful man has the impulse to relate a new fact to his general view of the world ; and the more important is the fact, the stronger will be the impulse. Indeed the new fact is not completely his till he has found a place for it in his mind. Paul himself, with his acute and massive intellect, shared and could not but share this impulse. So far is he from despising philosophy that he himself in other epistles, and even in parts of this one, throws out suggestions and more than suggestions towards a theological system. It would be too much to say that he actually constructs a scheme ; but the impulse is always there and we often meet with more or less highly developed theological arguments (cf. xv. ; Rom. : Gal. iii. f.).

What Paul is here rebuking and ridiculing is the superficial *σοφία* of the Corinthians. Their Christian experience is as yet very slender. There is jealousy and strife among them (i. 11)

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

and they “are yet carnal” (iii. 3). They were only “babes in Christ” (iii. 1) who had to be fed with milk, not with meat: “for ye were not able to bear it; *nay, not even now are ye able*” (iii. 2). The theology that rises out of such a religious experience is not likely to be a very profound one: yet the Corinthians were moved by the irrepressible Greek instinct to reduce their new religion to the terms of philosophy. This is the real point of Paul’s repeated allusions to Greek “wisdom”: in characterizing the message he has to proclaim as “foolishness,” there is a certain mock humility. Elsewhere in this epistle, notably in iv. 10, Paul gives to his words an ironical point.

Reading between the lines we get a glimpse, in this section, into the difficulties under which Paul worked. The cross was to him the core of his message; but it was infinitely hard to find a place for it either in the Greek or the Jewish mind. There was no room for it either in Jewish hopes or in Greek philosophy; yet it was only through belief in this “foolish message” that men could be saved (ver. 21). Often and long must Paul have argued for the cross against Jewish obstinacy and Greek conceit—sometimes unsuccessfully, sometimes with success; for among “those that were called were both Jews and Greeks” (ver. 24).

*The Recipients of the Gospel Call (i. 26–30).*

26. To illustrate still further the nature of his gospel, Paul turns abruptly to his readers whom, with earnest courtesy, he addresses as *brethren*, and by a skilful personal appeal—**look at YOUR calling**—he reminds them of the lowly place they occupied, for the most part, in Corinthian society, and of the essential simplicity of a gospel which could appeal to, and win, such men. **Not many of you are philosophers** (literally, *wise according to the flesh*, that is, in the world’s sense), **nor are there many influential people among you**, **nor many well born**. The sentence is elliptical: either *ἐκλήθησαν* (were called), or perhaps more pointedly *ἐστέ* (ye are), has to be supplied. The *calling* is of course to the Christian life (cf. i. 2).

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are :

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Paul is speaking here of the Corinthian church (*your calling*), but the remark would no doubt be applicable to the early Christian church generally. It is not implied, however, that that church was composed exclusively of the humbler elements of the population : there were some men of culture, influence, and birth among her members, but *not many*. These would be the classes most difficult to attract by the story of the cross. Some idea of the composition of the church may be inferred from the proper names that occur in the epistle ; for example, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Gaius, names which “probably indicate freedmen.” There would in all likelihood be many freedmen and some slaves. Here again, as in ver. 24, it is worth while to note the rhythmic repetition (*not many*) three times, a feature still more marked in the threefold repetition in the next two verses, and which invests the statements with a certain solemnity.

27, 28. Not many of those in high place were called : **on the contrary**, it was the world’s foolish things that God selected, when He chose you, and the reason of His choice was that He might shame the so-called wise men, and it was the world’s feeble things that God selected, that He might shame the strong things, and it was the things of the world that were low and of no account that God selected, the things that were as good as non-existent (*not ῥὰ οὐκ ὄντα* : they did actually exist, but they were as if they did not exist, hence *ῥὰ μὴ ὄντα*) that he might bring down the things that exist to nothing. Here are three very deliberate statements, which accurately correspond to the three types alluded to in ver. 26—the wise, the powerful, and the highborn. The impressive repetition of the words *God chose* is well calculated to call attention to the paradox of the divine method. God’s ways are not our ways :

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption :

the divine standards and methods are the antipodes of the human. It is the foolish, the feeble, the obscure, that are the peculiar objects of the divine choice. The neuter form of the adjectives (*τὰ μωρὰ, τὰ ἀσθενῆ, etc.*) gives an impersonal turn to the whole sentence, which thus becomes a statement of the general principles of the divine operation : but the statement is suggested to Paul's mind by the Corinthian situation, and, though in form impersonal, it is in reality, personal : He selected the foolish *things* that He might shame the wise *men* (*τοὺς σοφούς*). His choice of the foolish was the most effective way of shaming the wise (*i.e.*) : their wisdom did not commend them to Him (cf. a similar utterance of our Lord in Mat. xi. 25). The method of the divine choice changes the aspect of the world : *the things that are* (*τὰ ὄντα*), the things which seem to have *solidity and reality*, it not only puts to shame, but annihilates. It is perhaps not unfair to see a fine irony in this ringing of the changes on the philosophical phrases *τὰ ὄντα* and *τὰ μὴ ὄντα*.

29. The ultimate object of this strange choice of God is that in His presence there be no glorying on the part of any mortal man. Man is but *flesh*, frail and sinful ; the wisdom and the power, in which he glories, give him no standing in the sight of God who ignores these things in His choice of men, *that there be no place for boasting*.

30. Any standing that we have, therefore, we owe to Him, not to anything that we, of ourselves, are or have or know ; and the only standing for which the Christian greatly cares is that which he has in Christ. Consequently you owe it to Him (God), says Paul to the Corinthians, that you are in union with Christ Jesus. It is also possible to translate : *from Him ye are, or have your being*, that is, ye are His children—in Christ. But the context, which throws its stress repeatedly upon the work of God, makes the former translation the more probable : it is from God, i.e. by His origination, *that you* (*ὑμεῖς*, emphatic,

31 That, as according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

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the obscure Corinthians) *are in Christ*. Nothing but the power and the goodness of God could have brought such as they into that blessed communion. Blessed indeed! for what have we not in Him? For **He**, by the gracious purpose of God (*ἀπὸ Θεοῦ*, from God as origin) became (or *was made*) **Wisdom to us**.

In a few trenchant words, Paul is about to bring the discussion to a close. The divine *σοφία* (wisdom) which he has been discussing is completed, gathered up and presented to Christians (not only to *you*, *ὑμῖς* of the first clause, but *to us*, *ἡμῖν*) in the historical figure (*έγενήθη*, aor.) of Christ Jesus: in Him can be read the mind and the purpose of God. This wisdom which is incarnate in Christ, manifests itself especially in two ways, as **Justification-and-Sanctification**, which, connected by *τε καὶ* (both-and), are to be considered in close combination, and also complete **Redemption**. These three substantives are better taken as explanatory of *σοφία* than as co-ordinate with it. Through Christ, who is the embodiment of God's wise purpose, comes *δικαιοσύνη*, which blends the meanings of *justification* and *righteousness*: in Him we are justified and regarded as ideally *righteous*. Intimately connected with this is *ἁγιασμός*, sanctification, separation to a *holy* life (cf. i. 2). The last term, *ἀπολύτρωσις*, is the most comprehensive of all, *redemption* in the largest sense, ransom (*λύτρον*) from (*ἀπό*) sin and misery, deliverance from sin and death and ultimate entrance into glory. Jesus Christ did not merely bring these things to us: He incarnates them (*ὅς ἐγενήθη*), and they are ours in Him.

31. Of ourselves, then, we are nothing. What we have—our acquittal, our holiness, our redemption—we have only in Christ, and this standing in Him we owe to God (*ἐξ αὐτοῦ*). Clearly, then, there is no room for boasting; and the final purpose of God in bringing us into this blessed and fruitful union with Christ is that, as it stands in Scripture (Jer. ix. 24), **he who glories should glory in the Lord**. The grammar is somewhat irregular: as *ἴρα* cannot go directly with the imperative, we may assume an ellipse: *that (it might*

be or come to pass), as the Scripture has it, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." (In LXX, as in the Hebrew of Jer. ix. 24, ἐν τούτῳ, in this, that . . .). It is difficult to determine precisely here whether by the Lord Paul means Christ or God. The word is equally applicable to both, and only the context can decide. The immediate context, however, has given great prominence to both. On the one hand, it is God who chooses men, and "it is of Him that ye are in Christ"; on the other hand, Christ is the divine wisdom, and redemption; it is His cross that saves, and into His name that we are baptized. The point is not of great importance: for whether the Lord be Christ or God, at any rate it is in one or other of these that we are to glory, and not in men or in earthly distinctions. The Corinthians, with their hero-worship of Paul, Apollos, and Peter, and with their tendency to excessive regard for wisdom, influence, and high birth (vv. 27 f.), had forgotten this. This quotation is more than usually appropriate. The original passage in Jeremiah furnishes the very same contrast, and almost in the very same terms, as Paul's admonition here. "Let not the wise man (*ὁ σοφός*) glory in his wisdom (*ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτοῦ*) neither let the mighty man (*ὁ ἱσχυρός*) glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches."

This section (vv. 26-31) serves the double purpose of illustrating the principle that governs the divine choice of men, and of rebuking the conceit of the Corinthians. God does not choose those who stand high as tried by the standards of the world: the very reverse. He chooses the foolish, the feeble, the base-born: and such—Paul very plainly hints—were most of them. Had His choice fallen upon the wise, the influential, the high-born, then *not many* of them would have been so honoured. He thus forces them back, in a spirit very similar to that of Jeremiah, to a recognition of their own utter insignificance—they were *τὰ μὴ ὄντα*, as good as non-existent—forces them to recognize that, for the marvel of their redemption, they are altogether indebted to God in Christ. Thus boasting is excluded, and humility is the only true wisdom.

## CHAPTER II

I AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

*Paul's Manner of Preaching at Corinth (ii. 1-5).*

1. Paul has just been urging upon the Corinthians the recognition of their own utter insignificance, and the wisdom of glorying in the Lord alone. This, he goes on to say, has been his own practice. He preached under an overwhelming sense of his own weakness, and he made no effort to commend his message to his audiences by rhetorical (*λόγον*) or philosophical (*σοφίας*) devices. As for me, brethren—note again the courteous address (i. 10, 11)—whatever may have been the practice of others—when I came to you, I came—the repetition concentrates attention forcibly upon his arrival—proclaiming the gospel, which he here calls the **testimony of God**, as in i. 6, he has called it *the testimony of Christ*, simply and not with any striking rhetorical or philosophical display. *μαρτύριον* seems better than *μυστήριον*, which may have crept in from ver. 7. The *μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ* is probably the testimony to God, that is, to His purpose in Christ—in short, the gospel.

2. Doubtless, had Paul used these devices which he despised, his message would at first have commended itself to a wider circle of Corinthians; but his refusal to avail himself of them was part of a *deliberate purpose*. Perhaps his experience at Athens from which he had come (Acts xviii. 1) had contributed to this: it may also partly explain his *fear and trembling*. For I did not decide to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him too—though I knew well how great the offence would be—as **crucified**. There is a slight, but appreciable difference, between “I decided not to know” and “I did not decide to know.” The Corinthians, with their argumentative instincts, are fond of airing their own knowledge (cf. viii. 1) and of meeting any one who claimed “to have some

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power :

knowledge" (*εἰδέραι τι*) : Paul resolves that, at any rate so long as he is among them (*ἐν ἡμῖν*) he will severely restrict his knowledge to one theme. Not only will he preach about nothing else ; but, for the time being, nothing else will be in his mind. The theme that fills it is Jesus Christ. He will not let his speech among the Corinthians drift into abstractions : it will be glowingly personal, gathered about the person *Jesus* who to him is the Messiah, *Christ*. In particular will it gather about that fact in the career of Jesus which was central—His crucifixion. Such a gospel would be anything but popular among Greeks—salvation by one who had died a malefactor's death (i. 23)—but that is the fact which Paul will supremely and continually hold both before his own mind and theirs.

3, 4. He is fully conscious, not only of the unpopularity of the message, but of the insufficiency of the preacher. **As for me, it was in weakness and in fear, a fear so great as to result in much trembling, that I came before you** (ver. 3). Here we get an interesting glimpse into Paul's public appearance : he was just the very reverse of the cool, self-confident, ready orator. On the contrary, he was overcome by a sense of his *feebleness*, in the face of the mighty task that devolved upon him as a preacher of Jesus Christ : he had a sense of *terror* which expressed itself in violent *trembling*. **And**, tried by Corinthian standards, his speech was as feeble as himself (cf. 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 6) : **my speech, and in particular my message, did not consist in plausible words of philosophy.** There was no *wisdom* in it, no such *persuasive* power, as the Greek mind delighted in. **But** here again we may suspect a little touch of irony : for though his preaching lacked these elements which the Greeks thought so important, yet its real power was incontrovertibly attested by its miraculous (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 12) effects, for it came in the shape of effects wrought upon the lives of his hearers, positive experimental **proof**, which could only come from the divine spirit and the divine

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

**power.** His words were not merely plausible, they were effective, because the spirit was behind them. His *proofs* were not skilful arguments, but living facts.

5. So the “*weak, timid, trembling*” Paul (ver. 3) turns out to be the *mighty* preacher. But his might is not his own: it is of the spirit (ver. 4) of God (ver. 5); and the divine *purpose* (*īra*) in choosing this man—or, it may be, his purpose in preaching as he did—was that your faith should not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. A faith which is to exist unshaken must not be built upon a clever argument, but on an appreciation of the demonstrated (*ἀποδείξει*) power of God. It is God, by His power, and not man, by his eloquence or philosophy, that saves the soul.

Paul offers himself here as an illustration of the truth that God does his mighty work through feeble instruments and by unworldly means.

#### *The Philosophy of the Gospel* (ii. 6–9).

6. Some of Paul’s words have conveyed the impression that he cared only for facts, especially for the Fact of Christ as Crucified, and refused to be drawn into the temptation of regarding the gospel on what we may call its philosophical side (i. 17, ii. 1, 4)—as a *σοφία*. As we have already seen (p. 30) that could hardly have been his meaning; besides, other expressions look the other way—Christ, for example, is called *wisdom* (i. 30) and *God’s wisdom* (i. 24). He has, then, a philosophy after all, which is intelligible, however, only to *the initiated*. Faith must not indeed rest in human philosophy (*ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων*): but there is another philosophy, the apostle goes on, a *wisdom*, which **we** (he and his fellow preachers) **utter**, not indeed indiscriminately, or before all kinds of audiences, but only **among those who are spiritually mature**, those who are not *babes* (iii. 1) but are *grown* to their *full Christian stature*: or the word

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory ;

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew :

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(τελείοις) so near *μυστηριῷ* in ver. 7, may be intended to suggest “those who are *initiated* into the Christian mystery.”

This *wisdom*, however, is not of this *world* (lit. of this *age*) : it does not share the temper and spirit of this age, whose values are in terms of things transitory and external (i. 26) ; nor is it a *wisdom of the rulers of this world*. Those who are in high place, and who ought to *know* (cf. ver. 8, *ἔγνωσαν*) best, made the most ghastly mistake of all (ver. 8). The *rulers of this world* might conceivably be angels, whom later Jewish belief (cf. Dan. x.-xii.) regarded as presiding over the nations. But, without further explanation, it is more probable that, like the *ἄρχοντες* of Romans xiii. 3, they are men, especially as their *wisdom* corresponds to the *wisdom of men* in the preceding verse, and the very same phrase, “the *rulers of this world*,” is used in ver. 8 of those who crucified Jesus. The same word, *οἱ ἄρχοντες αἰντῶν*, is used in Acts xiii. 27 of the Jewish rulers who compassed Jesus’ death. The similarity of this passage—where the *rulers* act *ἀγνοήσαντες*, in ignorance—with i Cor. ii. 8 where it is said that they did not know (*οὐδὲντες ἔγνωκεν*) puts it practically beyond doubt that the *rulers of this world* are earthly *rulers*, not angelic or demonic. In general, it refers to the wise, influential, and high-born (i. 26) : in particular, especially in ver. 8, to men like Pilate and the high priest.

It was not such a *wisdom* that Paul proclaimed. The men, like their *wisdom*, were ephemeral, men **who are being brought to nought** : in the progressive march of the divine purpose, they are gradually but surely dislodged and replaced by the men of another type whom they despise, but whom God has chosen (i. 28). The use of the same verb here as in i. 28 (*καταργεῖν*) strengthens the probability of the interpretation given above. Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod—this type of man is dying or doomed.

7, 8. But it is not that sort of *wisdom*, not a *human* *wisdom* at all (ver. 5), says Paul, but a *divine wisdom*, God’s *wisdom* (*θεοῦ*, emphatic) that **we** utter ; and this we do in the form of a

for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

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**mystery**, which, in Biblical usage, does not mean an obscure or enigmatic fact, but a truth which is only known because it is revealed (Rom. xvi. 25 f.). For this wisdom is **one which has been lying** (perf. ptc.) for ages (cf. Rom. xvi. 25) in concealment. In contrast with the futile and transitory wisdom of the rulers of this world, this is a wisdom deep-rooted in the ancient purpose of God, **one which God foreordained before the ages, and its ultimate aim (*εἰς*) is our glory**. This is not the heavenly glory exclusively : it includes the state which, here and now, is ours in Christ (i. 30), all that marvellous experience which is the lot of *those who love Him* (ii. 9) : it is admirably illustrated by iii. 21, 22. Only such as these can understand this divine and ancient wisdom : it is a wisdom which (*ἥν* goes with *σοφίαν*, not with *δόξαν*) **none of the rulers of this world** (cf. ver. 6) **has any idea of** (lit. has come to know) : for it was their ignorance of it that led them to **crucify the Lord of glory**. What a deadly ignorance of the divine purpose must that have been which led the men in authority, who ought to have been the wisest, to perpetrate a deed so awful as to put the *Lord* to the death of a *slave*, to put the *glorious* *Lord* to the *ignominious* death of *crucifixion* ! The *Lord of Glory* is the *Lord* whose characteristic is *glory*, though that *glory* came in so humble a guise that it was hidden from the eyes of the world's "wise" men. As the *Lord of glory*, He is the guarantee of our *glory* (*δόξα ημῶν*, ver. 7).

9. The construction of ver. 9 is not certain. "The things which eye saw not" are governed (a) either by an implicit "we speak," carried over from vv. 6, 7, or (b) by "God *revealed*" in ver. 10. The latter construction is only possible if in ver. 10 we read *δέ* (which would then introduce the apodosis) instead of *γάρ*, which appears to be more correct. Probably, therefore, ver. 10 begins a new sentence, and ver. 9 goes with and con-

10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

cludes the preceding paragraph. The meaning will then be : but, in the words of Scripture, we utter things which no eye saw and no ear heard and no human mind conceived, even all the things that God, in accordance with His ancient purpose (ver. 7), prepared, not indeed for the whole world, believers and unbelievers alike, but for those that love Him. No Old Testament passage exactly corresponds to the words here cited, and it is tempting to accept the tradition, attested by Origen and Jerome, that the reference is to a lost Apocalypse of Elijah. But it is equally possible to assume that we have simply a loose quotation from memory combining elements of Isaiah lxiv. 4 and lxv. 16, 17. These things which God has prepared and which constitute the theme of Paul's preaching, belong as much to the present as to the future : they constitute the unimaginable blessings which are ours "in Christ."

Paul has, then, his philosophy after all, and one infinitely profounder than any wisdom of this world. Beneath his simple and unadorned speech lies the deepest of all mysteries, which takes its origin in an ancient purpose of God, and which has for its end our glory. When that purpose became incarnate in Jesus, the world's great men tragically failed to understand it : no merely human sense (*e.g.* eye, ear) or intellect can fathom it. How then can it be known at all ? To that question Paul addresses himself in the next section.

*The Need of Revelation by the Divine Spirit* (ii. 10–iii. 2).

10. It can only be known by revelation. **For** (*γὰρ* rather than *δέ*) **to us**, not to the rulers (vv. 6, 8), but to Paul and those who are spiritually mature (*τελεῖοι*, ver. 6) like him, **God REVEALED** it (the wisdom, or the things, *α.* ver. 9). Such knowledge can only be the result of a *divine* revelation. How then is that effected ? **Through the spirit**—the spirit of God, no doubt, though probably it is better to omit the *αὐτοῦ*. Nothing is hid from it, **for the divine spirit moves everywhere**

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

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(Ps. cxxxix.) and **searches everything, even the deep things of God**; therefore it alone can communicate to men the profound purposes of God, which have their centre and realization in Christ (ver. 16).

**11.** To illustrate this, says Paul, let us take a human analogy — note the threefold repetition in this verse of the word *man*. **For among men, who has any knowledge of the inner experiences of another?** (lit. the things of *the man* in question). All the phenomena of a man's inner life, his purposes, aspirations, etc., are unknown, and can only be the object of conjecture, until he reveals them: they are known to no one except to **the spirit that is resident in the man himself**. Exactly so is it with God. **No one has acquired any insight** (lit. has come to know) **into the things of God** generally, to say nothing of **the deep things** (ver. 10) **except the spirit of God**. He apparently avoids deliberately the phrase "the spirit that is in God": this might suggest merely the divine self-consciousness, and that he means something more than this by the spirit is plain from ver. 12, where he describes it as **the spirit that proceeds from God**.

**12.** God's purpose, then, if it is to be known, must be communicated: and if Paul understands this divine philosophy, it is because he has received the spirit. **Now as for us** (cf. *ἵμιν* ver. 10), **it was not the worldly spirit that we received**, when we became Christ's, **but the spirit that proceeds from God**. It is this spirit that brings assurance and illumination: it is given that **we might know the favours that God conferred upon us** in Christ, that is, the things alluded to in ver. 9, and summed up in the word "*glory*" (ver. 7). The **spirit of the world** is the spirit of the worldly wise and influential, to whom the cross is foolishness; it is practically equal to the

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

worldly spirit. Obviously this can throw no light upon the purposes and gifts of God, but only the spirit of God Himself.

13. Paul is anxious to disclaim all thought that this wisdom is of a really esoteric kind: he is not afraid or unwilling to proclaim it. The blessings conferred by God in Christ are things which we also utter—and again comes the now familiar contrast between the divine and the human—in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the divine spirit. Not only are the thoughts which he utters in speaking and preaching (*λόγος, κήρυγμα*, ver. 4) inspired by the spirit; but even the very words. The bold claim which he here makes, and which must be interpreted in the *spirit* rather than in the letter, shows how overwhelming was his consciousness of the divine presence. The following phrase, *πνευματικ-οῖς* (or -*ῷς*) *πνευματικὰ συνκρίνοντες*, is somewhat difficult to interpret. Does *συνκρίνω* mean *combine, compare, or interpret?* and is *πνευματικοῖς*, if this be read, masc. or neut.? Probably neut., as this verse deals with the theme of the preaching—the persons are not mentioned till ver. 14. In that case, it seems best to translate *συνκρ.* by *combining*: the two *πνευματικά* which are combined are the thoughts and the words—both, as he has just been saying, are inspired by the spirit: therefore “we utter these things, combining spiritual ideas with spiritual language.” It is impossible to reproduce in English the extraordinary emphasis produced by the juxtaposition of the three words implying *spirit*—*πνεύματος, πνευματικοῖς, πνευματικά*. The truth for which Paul is pleading, that the Christian wisdom is a *revelation* communicated by the *spirit*, is gathered up here with overwhelming force.

14. Now a natural man is not receptive of the things of the spirit of God. *Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*, the psychic man, is a strange expression. It is used in the New Testament to denote

him : neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

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the man who has only a  $\psi\nu\chi\nu$  (soul) but no  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  (spirit). Of course, in one sense, every man has a  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$  (cf. ver. 11) : but where it is untouched and unilluminated by the divine spirit, it is as good as non-existent (cf. Jude, ver. 19, where certain men are described as *psychic*, *not having*  $\pi\nu\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha$ , having soul, but no spirit). In that case, the man's non-physical life can only express itself through his  $\psi\nu\chi\nu$ , soul. The soul is not necessarily bad, but it represents the unpurified natural affections, the earthly as opposed to the heavenly, the natural as opposed to the spiritual and supernatural. Such a man, obviously, *does not welcome* the things of the divine spirit, he has no appreciation of them, *for to him they are folly*, and he can attain no knowledge of them, for the simple reason that *the test of them is a spiritual one*, and having no *spiritual illumination*, he lacks the faculty to test them.

15. The spiritual man, on the other hand, who possesses this faculty, has the test for everything. There is a whole world of experience sealed to the "psychic" man, but familiar to him : but besides, in virtue of his spiritual illumination, he can estimate not only these things, but *all things* at their proper value. This very epistle, with its many exhibitions of Paul's versatility and tact in dealing with various and delicate problems, is an excellent illustration of the power he here claims for the spiritual man. But while the spiritual man tests everything, he is not himself capable of being tested by any one who is not spiritual. The Corinthians have been criticizing Paul (iv. 3, ix. 3) ; he here gently hints that, so long as they remain unspiritual, they lack the power to understand him, and their criticisms can amount to nothing.

16. Paul clenches his point here, as often, by a quotation from the Old Testament (Isaiah xl. 13), though he does not

## CHAPTER III

1 AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

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introduce it with a (*καθὼς*) γέγραπται (i. 31, 19). To judge the spiritual man adequately, one must oneself be spiritual, that is, be in possession of the spirit of God (ver. 11), and this can be said of no merely "psychic" man. The spiritual man is therefore beyond the range of his criticisms: for, in the words of Isaiah, **who** (that is, no mere man) ever **knew** (aor.) **the mind of the Lord?** Νοῦς not improperly translates the Hebrew word for *spirit*; it is the spirit on its intellectual side. **But WE** (*ἡμεῖς*, emphatic) **are in possession of the spirit of the Lord**, or as he here calls it, **the mind of Christ**. In Isaiah, *the Lord* is of course God; the easy substitution of *Christ* for the Lord in the second clause, shows how closely, for Paul, Christ and God were identified (cf. i. 3).

iii. 1, 2. Paul would only have been too glad to have expounded to the Corinthians the "mystery" of "the wisdom of God": but to men in such a condition as theirs, the thing was simply impossible. **And I for my part, brethren,** he continues, **could not speak to you as to spiritual men**, for you were nothing of the kind: **on the contrary**, I was obliged to address you **as men of flesh, as babes in Christ**. The Corinthians were Christians, they were *in Christ*; but they had made no progress towards spiritual maturity (ii. 6), they were still babes, as he tenderly (cf. *brethren*, ver. 1) and somewhat excusingly calls them. They were—not indeed *psychic*, natural men (ii. 14)—but practically on the same level, in so far as they were incapable (*οὐκ ἐδύνασθε*, ver. 2) of a truly spiritual appreciation. They were, in a word, *σάρκινοι*, men of flesh, men whose nature is fleshly, slightly different from *σαρκικοί* of ver. 3, of fleshly instincts and tendencies, carnal. And since you were

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

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babes, it was with milk that I fed you, not with solid food, for you were not yet strong enough (ver. 2). For a similar idea, cf. Hebrews v. 12-vi. 2. There is nothing esoteric in Christianity, but the presentation of it has to be adapted to the capacities of those who are taught. *He* was not able (*οὐκ ἤδυναθην*) because *they* were not able (*οὐκ ἔδύνασθε*).

Without sympathy, all criticism is wide of the mark. This is the general truth, which Paul here applies with great force to the specific truths of Christianity. What he calls "the things of the spirit" can only be understood and interpreted by one who himself has the spirit, that is by one who has been enlightened. Now the Corinthians, though they were Christians (cf. ver. 1) because they had believed (*ἐπιστεύσατε*, ver. 5) had not yet (*οὐπώ*) reached this stage. Where the impediment lay, we see in the following section.

*The Carnality of Partisanship: the Whole Church is God's, her Leaders but His Servants* (iii. 3-9).

3. When I was with you, says the Apostle, you were not strong enough for the solid food I was prepared to give, and your present dissensions show that the case is no better to-day. **Why, even at this moment you are not strong enough, for you are carnal still.** The context shows that this word has a wide scope. It is not confined to sexual, or even to sensual sins, but covers those tempers and dispositions that express themselves in strife and dissension. Their carnality was undeniable: **for where there is among you emulation or jealousy, and the strife to which it too surely leads, are ye not carnal? are ye not leading your lives (lit. walking) after the fashion of unenlightened men?** After *strife*, some MSS. wrongly add "and divisions" (*καὶ διχοστασίαι*), following Gal. v. 20. The metaphor of *walking* applied to a way of life is very frequent in the Bible, and was very natural to an Oriental,

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I *am* of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.

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4, 5. Paul at once proceeds with a concrete illustration of the strife which proves their carnality. I mean, When one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I to Apollos," are you not moving on a purely human, unenlightened plane ? (ver. 4). He does not here add Peter, as in i. 12, iii. 22 : his own name and that of Apollos would naturally be the most familiar, and the alleged differences between them would be the chief cause of strife. What then, he asks with rising emotion, is Apollos ? What, neuter, τι, much more effective than τις, who : cf. εν, ver. 8 ; what is there in Apollos or Paul ? The question is dramatically repeated : and what is Paul ? Not, what *am* I ? He repeats their party word. Ministers, he answers with emphasis,—and not heads of parties : simply lowly servants, by whose agency ye became believers (*ἐπιστεύσατε*, aorist, appropriately of the initial act of belief). Clearly, then, some had been converted through Apollos. Bengel happily comments : *through* whom, not *in* whom ye believed : they are but agents, not objects of faith. And each ministered, according as the Lord (whether Christ, or perhaps God : cf. ver. 9 and especially v. 10 : and for similar doubt cf. i. 31) endowed him.

6. That these men are but ministers, and their powers but gifts, is illustrated by the following verse : It was I (*ἐγώ*, emphatic) who planted, it was Apollos who watered. The Corinthian church is implicitly compared to a garden or a field (cf. ver. 9) and Paul does not deny the place of human agency in its cultivation, for God works *through* (διά, ver. 5) men ; nay, the human agents are organized and differentiated, as planters and waterers. But all this human effort would result in nothing, were it not for the mysterious divine power behind it ; it was no man, but God Himself who all the time (imperf.) was causing it to grow. The difference between the aorist and the im-

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one : and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

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perfect is here aptly illustrated ; the work of Paul and Apollos is represented as an act, that of God as a continuous process. Paul's generous reference to Apollos here, as following up the work which he himself had begun, is a delicate rebuke of the Corinthian party spirit, which set them up as rivals.

7, 8. **So then**, if the real growth is due to that subtle underlying power of God, without which planting and watering would alike be useless, the human agents may be said, in one aspect, not to count at all : **neither planter nor waterer is anything whatever** : **on the contrary it is God, who causes the growth**, that is all in all (ver. 7). These last words must be supplied : the meaning must be, not that God is something (*τι*) but that He is everything. Still, though this is true, and all Christian work is swallowed up in the one (*εν*) service of the one God, individuals do count after all, and their work as individuals will be duly recognized and rewarded. **Now planter and waterer are one**, *εν*, neuter, as if, in their capacity as God's servants, their personality was lost : they are, as it were, one in service, one *instrumentality*. Again, they are *one*, not therefore rivals, as the Corinthians had been representing them. Paul's words might be conceivably taken as a depreciation of the individual, but the last clause of ver. 9 effectually removes all possibility of misapprehension ; and the whole of the next section (vv. 10-15) is an eloquent plea for personal responsibility. Though God is everything, the individual is something, yea, very much : **and each man shall receive his own proper reward for his own proper toil**. This verse, with its double *ἴδιον* effectively reinstates the individual. An ancient commentator, noting that the apostle uses *κόπον*, toil, not *ἔργον*, work, quaintly remarks : "and what if he did not finish the work ? at any rate he toiled."

9 For we are labourers together with God : ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

9. This truth of the relative importance of the individual is, however, after all, at this stage, only subsidiary : the point which Paul is mainly concerned to drive home is that all the church, members and leaders alike, are God's, and therefore that all disposition to partisanship should vanish before this great unity. **For it is GOD'S fellow workers that we are : it is GOD'S field, GOD'S building that you are.** In all three clauses, Θεοῦ, as first word, is very emphatic. This is the real shame of the party spirit, that they are all God's : as God's, they must be one. There must be no factions: planter and waterer are "fellow-workers" (*συν*)—not rivals, as the Corinthians seemed to think ; and they were *God's* workers—therefore, in any case, one in Him. The meaning is not, "fellow-workers *with* God," but belonging to God. The church has already been described by implication as a field (vv. 6–8), in the next section (vv. 10–16) it is described as a building; the last clauses of ver. 9 summarize the one section and introduce the other.

The unspiritual nature of the Corinthians is shown by their church divisions, and these again rest on an inadequate appreciation of the fact that the church is God's, and her leaders but His ministers. The unity, which is threatened, will be assured when that is understood.

*The Responsibility of the Church's Leaders (iii. 10–15).*

10. Paul now works out with some elaboration the idea of the church as a building, to which he has been led by the last words of ver. 9. There is but one building—God's, and one foundation—Jesus Christ : but the builders are many (ver. 11), and the materials are varied. The foundation is laid once for all (*κείμενος*, ver. 11), yet in a sense it must also be laid by the particular founder of a local church, such as Paul. This required skill, wisdom (*σοφός*, ver. 10), and this, *by the grace of God*, he possesses ; or it may be that this phrase goes with *ἴθησα*—it

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

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was by the grace of God that he was privileged, as an apostle by vocation (i. 1) to *lay a foundation*. Though *σοφός* may only mean skilful, it is impossible, after the long discussion in chs. i. and ii., not only to find in it an allusion to *σοφία* (wisdom) in the more technical sense. In spite of his seeming depreciation of wisdom, he claims himself to be wise, as a master-builder (a word which does not mean designer, but chief workman); but his is the true wisdom that comes by the favour of God. **According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master-builder I laid a foundation.** That was his peculiar task: it was the business of others to *build upon*, to develop his work. **And another builds, or is building, upon it.** He can hardly be referring to Apollos, who was not at Corinth, when the letter was being written (xvi. 12). **But let each man see how,** that is, with what materials **he is building upon it.** Paul's work as a foundation builder is secure: here is a solemn warning to the other teachers, who continue his work. The reference all through appears to be to teachers and their teaching.

11. It is only about the superstructure that advice needs to be given: for about the foundation there can be no doubt. It is fixed and sure, laid already, and once for all: and **no one can lay another foundation alongside of** (*παρά* with acc.) **the one already laid** (by God), and **that is Jesus Christ:** *παρά*, alongside of, in comparison with, here almost=than. *Jesus* is the foundation: the church is founded upon a Person, not upon a system of truths. This historical person, however, is the Messiah, Christ, hope of the ancient Jew, hope of the world's heart, God's own anointed; so that this name is a confession,—the earliest, simplest, profoundest of the church. The church is founded upon Jesus and the recognition of His Messiahship: every time we speak intelligently of *Jesus Christ* we acknowledge that.

12. Now those who accept this as the foundation of the Christian church, *build* upon it structures of very varying

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss ; but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.

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material and value—some precious and durable, such as *gold, silver, and costly stones*, like marble ; and some poor and perishable, like *wood, hay, and stubble*. Or, to be more accurate, these are not different structures, but different material built into one divine temple (ver. 17) God's building (ver. 9). The allusion is to different types of teaching. **If any man builds on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, on the one hand, or wood, hay, stubble, on the other—**

**13-15.** Now what is to be the test of the value of this material ? That will be seen, says Paul, in the judgment. **Every individual's work shall be made manifest, for the judgment day shall make it plain**—The *day*, corresponding to the day of Jehovah in the Old Testament, is the day when Christ shall appear. This day would disclose the quality of every work, **for its light is the bright light of fire : it (that is, the day) is revealed in fire.** According to contemporary belief, when Christ came, it would be “in flaming fire” (2 Thes. i. 7). And consequently **the quality of every individual's work will be tested by the fire.** *aiρό* is either nominative “the fire *itself*”—of its own native force ; or accusative—the fire will test *it*. If then, in the judgment day, any man's work, which he built *thereon* (on the foundation), shall abide (*μένει*, fut., not *μένετ*) that is, if it shall stand that fiery test, he shall receive reward (ver. 14, cf. 8) ; if, however, any man's work shall be burnt up, he shall suffer the loss of his reward. The only work to be rewarded is the work that can stand the final test. The fire, that will leave the stone intact, will reduce the wood and stubble to ashes : it will be an effective test of values. **But,** though

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

his part of the building will perish, **the man himself will escape, be saved**, because he is a Christian. His work is flimsy, but he has at least *built it on* the true foundation. Note the rhythmic balance between these clauses (without even a connecting particle) that contrast the fate of the good and the bad builder (*εἰ τίνος τὸ ἐργόν*, twice). The man will indeed be saved, **yet so as through fire**; a very graphic picture of his pitiable plight on the judgment day. He escapes, but it is *through the flames*, that leap and crackle around him, and consume his work, as, panting and terrified, he beats his retreat.

The real quality of the work done by the teachers of the church, so hard to estimate amid the confusions of party contention, will be revealed in the day of judgment, when only that which is solid and precious, will survive. This truth is expressed in eschatological terms, but it may legitimately be given a larger application. Every crisis is a judgment; in its fire quality is tested, and the fit survives.

*The Responsibility of the Church's Members (iii. 16, 17).*

16, 17. To the warning (*βλεπέτω*, ver. 10) addressed to the teachers is appended a warning to the members of the church, **Do you not know**—such a question was calculated to make the Corinthians wince, who prided themselves on their knowledge (cf. viii. 1)—**that you are** not only God's *building* (ver. 9), but His *holy* building, **God's temple** (*ναός* is the inner shrine, the abode of the Deity), and that **God's spirit dwells in you** as a whole—not here, as in vi. 19, in the individuals; we might therefore render “*among you*.” And just as any one guilty of the sacrilege of destroying an earthly temple would be put to death, so if **any one destroys God's temple, destruction shall be his fate at the hands of**

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God : for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

**God.** The juxtaposition of  $\phi\theta\varepsilon i\rho e\iota$  and  $\phi\theta\varepsilon e\rho e\iota$  is very impressive (cf. ii. 13). **For God's temple is holy, the which are ye.** *The which* ( $o\iota\tau u\nu\epsilon s$ ) probably refers rather to *holy* than to temple, which would involve a repetition of ver. 16. When we ask how the holiness, to which the church was called (1. 2) was imperilled, we are tempted to think of such immoralities as are described later in the letter (cf. v. 1); but, in this context, the reference is probably to the schismatic spirit, which threatened the church's unity. This, as we have seen, is the real carnality (ver. 3).

Those who, whether by party strife or immorality, "destroy" the church, are worse than those who build badly upon the true foundation, and their fate shall be more terrible. The one shall escape through the flames, the other shall be consumed by them.

*The Partisan Spirit Obscures the Glorious Heritage* (iii. 18-23).

**18-20.** How grievously Paul was vexed by the partisan spirit of the Corinthian church is shewn by the earnestness and frequency with which he illustrates the error of it from different points of view. When party cries are abroad, it is so easy for a man to take his measure wrongly, to *think himself wise*, when he is in reality a fool. But **let no man deceive himself: if any one thinks that he is wise among you in this world** (or *age*), if any counts himself *worldly wise*, **let him at once reverse his standards, become a fool in the eyes of the world, and then true wisdom will begin to be possible: let him become a fool, that he may become wise.**

21 Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

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The conceit of wisdom is well suggested by the need of display : wise *among you*. The wisdom of *this world* (vv. 18, 19) is transient and its representatives are doomed (ii. 6). The standards of the world and of God and, therefore of His church, are diametrically opposed : **for the wisdom of this world is folly in the eyes of God.** This contrast had been frequently met with in the first two chapters (cf. i. 18, 20, etc.). In his customary way, Paul proves, or at least, confirms this point, by an appeal to the Old Testament—**for it stands in Scripture**—citing Job v. 13 (the only citation from Job in the New Testament) which speaks of God as “catching the wise in their cunning,” and again Psalm xciv. 11, “The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise (in the Psalm of man) that they are futile.” Their clever calculations turn out to be not only idle, but ruinous, involving them in destruction : and if this be the end of their wisdom, it is indeed a veritable folly (ver. 19a). Some interpret this section simply as a rebuke of conceit ; but considering the close connection between vv. 20 and 21 (*ώστε, consequently*), it seems better to connect the conceit with the party spirit (cf. iv. 6).

**21-23.** Paul concludes his argument in a magnificent climax. **Therefore let no one glory in men**—an admonition which he had already stated positively in i. 31 : *Let him glory in the Lord.* It is absurd, he argues, to glory in individual leaders : you are only thereby obscuring the real splendour of your inheritance, **for all the leaders are yours, indeed all things are yours.** A favourite maxim of the Stoics was that all things belong to the wise man, and the same bold claim may well have been often upon the lips of Corinthian Christians. But if so, their sectarianism showed that they did not realize the full sweep of such a claim. All the leaders belonged to the *whole* church, not each to a section only. You do not belong

to them ("I am Paul's, I am Peter's") but they to you, all of them to all of you—**whether Paul or Apollos or Peter**. Nay, not they only, but the whole material world—it is your servant, contributory to your deepest interests : nay, not the material world only, but all the manifold mystery of human experience, life and death—*life*, in which we have union with Christ and *death* which is gain (Phil. i. 21) by ushering us into higher glory : nay, not the experience of this life alone, but all possible experience throughout the infinite ages, **things present and things to come**. He sums up the stupendous claim in the words with which he introduced it—all **things are yours**—and instantly follows it up with words that fall upon Corinthian conceit like a bolt from the blue : **but ye are Christ's**. They are owners, but they are not their own. The universe is theirs, but they hold it under the lordship of Christ. They are masters of all things, but He is master of them. *You*, not some (i. 12), but all of you, *are Christ's*. He does not belong to you in the sense in which Paul, Apollos and Peter do, hence His name is not added as in i. 12 after theirs. And even Christ is not His own : He is God's (ver. 23). In what sense is He God's? Especially as His Son. Christ is not God, He is God's, belongs to Him : the head of Christ is God (xi. 3, cf. xv. 28).

What a climax! How the last word lights up the whole situation and shows how unworthy, how indescribably foolish and wrong was the party strife of the Corinthians. As there is one God over all, and one Lord, Christ Jesus, so should there be one church, in whose unbroken life the peace of God should find itself reflected. There could be no more tender or forcible rebuke of that denominationalism, which, when accentuated, injures the real life of the Christian church, than these wonderful words of Paul. All the saints and leaders, of whatsoever communion, who, by their words or deeds, have blessed the lives of men, belong to the whole church. They are all ours ; and it is for us not to stultify, by the limitation of our sympathies, the blessing that they are fitted to be to us. Sectarianism and all its pettinesses will vanish, where it is remembered that we are Christ's and Christ is God's. Verse 22 illustrates what Paul meant by the glory ( $\deltaό\xi\alpha$ ) to which God destined us (ii. 7). The Christian is the real master of the universe ; all things are

## CHAPTER IV

1 LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should

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his—all things in history and experience, in time and space—being wrought together for his good by the God who is beneath and through and above them all.

*Paul Warns the Corinthians Against Judging Their Leaders*  
(iv. 1-5).

Paul has just been exposing the folly and the sin of party spirit by showing its power to limit, and even to blight, the Christian's glorious inheritance : he now illustrates its evil effects from another side, by showing how it encourages in the church a critical and censorious spirit.

1, 2. So (not as precedes, but as follows) let a man (*ἀνθρωπος*, rather stronger than the indefinite *τις*) account of us—of the leaders generally ; perhaps he is thinking especially of himself and Apollos—as servants (*ὑπηρέτας*, much the same in meaning as *διάκονοι* in iii. 5) of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. The steward is the slave who dispenses the stores of the house (Luke xii. 42), and the stores are the mysteries, that is, truths once hidden, now revealed, or to be revealed. It is the duty of the leaders to dispense these stores, to disclose these truths, to the church, which is the household of God. Here moreover, just as in a private house, so also in the household of God, the first and last requirement of a steward is proved fidelity. The test of a true leader is not his oratorical or philosophical power, his “word” or “wisdom,” to use the familiar phrases of this epistle, but the fidelity with which he performs the duties of his stewardship.

3, 4. But who is to be the judge of this fidelity ? The only judgment worth considering seriously is that of Christ : human

be judged of you, or of man's judgment : yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing by myself ; yet am I not thereby justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the

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judgment is of *very little* account, whether judgment of others or even that which a man passes upon himself. From this passage, and still more clearly from ix. 3, we can see that Paul has been the object of criticism. **But to me it amounts to (*eis*) very little that I am judged by you or indeed by any human judgment (day).** This curious phrase *human day* appears to be suggested by "the day of the Lord" : it is the day when man judges as contrasted with the day when the Lord judges. Paul was alike indifferent to their praise and blame : nay—so far was he from caring for *human judgment* that **I do not even judge myself.** The spiritual man does indeed judge all things (ii. 15), but he does not forget that Christ judges him ; and with this ultimate infallible judgment in view, he recognizes the inadequacy of the judgment even of an approving conscience. **For though I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet that does not justify me** (lit. not in this do I stand justified, *δεδικαιώμαι*, perf.). It is a question whether *justify* should be taken, as above, in its ordinary, or in its more technical sense. Does Paul simply mean, "I am not justified by that" ;—the approval of my conscience is no absolute proof that I am free from blame? or does he mean "I am justified"—in the technical sense—"but not by that" : that is, "I owe my justification to Christ, and not to my own good conscience"? The order of the words (*οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ*) is somewhat in favour of the second interpretation, but the general context rather supports the first. In spite of his good conscience, then, Paul will not judge himself : **but he that judgeth me is one higher even than conscience, viz., the Lord.** That judgment is still future and will take place, *when the Lord come* (ver. 5).

5. So then, as the true judgment is not human, but divine, not that which the "wise" Corinthians can pass, but that which

hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.

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Christ alone can pass, and as it belongs not to the present but to the future, it is wrong of the Corinthians to anticipate it by premature and necessarily shallow criticisms of their own. **Do not therefore pass any judgment before the proper time**, that is, **until the Lord come**. His coming was one of the great articles of faith, and when He came, He would show Himself as one who will both throw light upon the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the secret counsels of the hearts. Here is a latent rebuke of the superficiality of Corinthian criticism, indeed of all human judgment. In the nature of the case it has to be based upon externals : it has to play upon surface things, it cannot see in the dark, it cannot pierce to the heart. But Christ, with His searching light and fire (cf. iii. 13), will bring out to the light the things that are hidden ; and **THEN the fitting praise will accrue to each man from God**. *Then*—and not till then, for Christ is the only competent judge : the Corinthians were guilty of an un-Christian impatience in *judging before the time*. At the coming of Christ, justice would be done all round : *each man* would receive *the (ō) praise*, that is, the praise which is his due. The praise would come *from God*. With such a confidence and such an outlook, it is easy to see that the praise or blame which *men* meted out meantime, as the Corinthians to their party leaders, was of very little account (*ἐλάχιστον*, ver. 3).

Paul here addresses to the Corinthians the salutary reminder that, though the leaders are their servants (iii. 22), yet they are also the servants of Christ (iv. 1), and that therefore, not they, but Christ, will be the ultimate judge of their stewardship. He rebukes at once the impatience and the superficiality of human criticism.

*The Royal Corinthians and the Worthless Apostles* (iv. 6–13).

The argument against the party spirit of the Corinthians is now drawing to a close. The apostle condemns the distinctions in which it resulted, by reminding the Corinthians that it was

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it* ?

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nothing that they had done, that put them in possession of the things of which they boasted. And their boasting was positively outrageous ! they spoke as if they had already reached the goal. Perhaps they had, exclaims the apostle ironically ; but at any rate he himself had not travelled so far. He was at that very moment the victim of hardships and sufferings and indignities manifold.

6. The party spirit has been under discussion from i. 12, and more specifically from iii. 5. The language in which Paul has attacked and condemned it is not abstract, but concrete. What he might have said in general terms, he has chosen to say definitely of his own party and that of Apollos, his convert and friend. If he condemned the partisan spirit in this manifestation, it went without saying that he would condemn it in every other. So these arguments, brethren, I have adapted to myself and Apollos, and I have done this on your account —my object is your edification—that by (lit. *in*) us you may learn the rule, never to go beyond what is written. Written where ? Most probably in the Old Testament, quotations from which are usually introduced by the word γέγραπται (cf. i. 31, iii. 19). That some such text as Jer. ix. 23, already quoted in i. 31, may be in Paul's mind, is strongly suggested by the next clause : that, as individuals ye may not be puffed up for the one leader and against the other (ver. 6). Paul aims at destroying the conceit engendered by party strife.

7. Turning in imagination to an individual (*σε*), Paul asks him : Who is it that marks you off as Paul's man or Apollos' man ? Or the words may mean, "To whom do you owe

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

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*your distinction? (Is it not to God?)*" He goes on, **And what do you have that you did not receive** from God ultimately (i. 4) and mediately through your teachers (iii. 6)? **And if it be a fact that (*kai*) you received it, why do you boast, as if you had not received it?**

8. He touches now, in an ironical vein, upon the things which they "have," all the more stinging that he has already described them as infants (iii. 1). **So you are already filled full, are you? wealthy already, are you? you have entered upon your kingdom without any help from us, have you?** These three clauses may be read either as exclamations or as questions: the former is better, as heightening the irony. He had spoken seriously of their wealth in i. 5, here he speaks sarcastically. They believed only too flippantly that all things were theirs (iii. 21); they took too light-hearted a view of their Christian obligations, they did not realize the austerity of service. The Messianic kingdom had already come, and they were sitting like kings upon their thrones, wealthy and satisfied. *ηδη* is very emphatic: already! so soon! Note the perf. *κεκορεσμένοι ἔστε*, in a condition of satiety: aor. *ἐπλοντήσατε*, *ἔβασιλεύσατε*, points to the moment when they attained their wealth and kingdom. The irony of the last clause is especially sad: you have become kings without us; why, you would never even have been Christians but for us. Yes, he goes ironically on, **I only wish you had been kings, that so, by virtue of our fortunate association with you, we too might share in your kingly rule.**

9. But alas! we are far enough from sitting on thrones. You Corinthians may be rich and royal, but it is very different with us apostles: we are like criminals doomed to die. **For, methinks, God has exhibited us the apostles** (others as well

10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong : ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place ;

12 And labour, working with our own hands ; being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it :

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as Paul himself, though the following verses 11-13 are no doubt coloured by personal experience) last—though we ought to be first (cf. xii. 28)—**as men condemned to death** : a cross rather than a throne is before us. **For we are become a spectacle to the whole world, alike to angels invisible and to men.** The figure underlying this verse may be that of a public festival, at which criminals or others were brought on to fight to the death. It has even been suggested that Paul may himself have been condemned, as a criminal, to fight with wild beasts in the theatre at Ephesus ; cf. xv. 32, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9. At the apostle's struggles and sufferings the whole universe is looking on—angelic eyes no less than human.

10-12. The ironical contrast between *you* and *us* is further developed in three brief but very pointed antitheses. **As for us, we are fools for Christ's sake**—the simple preaching of Christ and His cross made them ridiculous in the eyes of the wise of this world (cf. i. 23 f.) ; **but ye are prudent in Christ** : they are indeed *in Christ* (cf. iii. 1), but the words have a special sting here—he attributes to the “wise” Corinthians a union with Christ, of which he says nothing when speaking of himself. **We are weak** (cf. ii. 3), **but ye are strong** : **ye are glorious, but we are in disgrace.** The order of the pronouns is here changed, to secure a better connection with the words that follow. Though Paul still uses the first person plural, there can be little doubt that in the following description (vv. 11-13), it is his own experience that he has primarily in view. His life as a Christian has been a stern one right up to the moment of writing. **Up to this very hour we suffer from hunger and thirst and insufficient clothing and blows—kings forsooth !—we have no fixed home, we**

13 Being defamed, we entreat : we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

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**work hard with our own hands :** cf. Acts xviii. 3 ; xx. 34 ;  
1 Thes. ii. 9.

12, 13. So much for our sufferings : in what spirit do we bear them ? **Abuse we requite**—not with counter-abuse, not even with silence, but—with blessing, **persecution with patience, calumny with gentle words of entreaty**, as Christ counselled (Luke vi. 28). And for our reward what have we ? **We are become, so to say, the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things (or men)**—like rinsings and scrapings, fit only for the gutter—; and that is how we are regarded and treated **up to this very moment**. As this minute description (vv. 11–13) begins and ends with the same phrase (*up to the present hour*), it would seem as if Paul was suffering from some very recent indignity. The words in ver. 13, *περικάθαρμα* and *περιψημα*, were also applied to criminals who were sacrificed for the public weal in times of calamity ; but the other meaning is perhaps preferable here.

In a few burning words, Paul has made clear the terrible contrast between his own position and that of the pretentious Corinthian converts—they, like kings upon their thrones, wise, wealthy, and glorious, he the ill-clad, homeless apostle, victim of blows, calumny and insult. That was what it cost to be a “faithful steward” (ver. 2) ; after such a recital, the Corinthians, conceited and comfortable, might well have misgivings as to their own fidelity.

*The Fatherly Admonition (iv. 14–21).*

14–16. Severe and almost bitter as were these last words (vv. 8–13), the Corinthians are to understand that Paul’s

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

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motive in writing them was the best. He loves the Corinthians as a father, and these words are his fatherly admonition to them. He did write some things to shame them (cf. vi. 5 ; xv. 34), but not these particular words. **Not by way of shaming you do I write these things, but as admonition to my beloved children** (ver. 14). He stands in a unique relation to the Corinthian church. Other teachers had built upon the foundation, but it was he who had laid it (iii. 10). These teachers are here called *παιδαγωγοί*, pedagogues, the name given to the slave who took charge of a young boy (cf. iii. 1, Gal. iii. 24) ; and there may be a touch of irony in the word *ten-thousand*, which suggests that there was no dearth in the supply. **For though ye may have ten thousand tutors in Christ, at any rate (ye have) not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, the sphere in which the Corinthians were begotten by the agency of the gospel, it was I (*ἐγώ*) who begat you.** As your father, therefore, I beseech you, become imitators of me, not in word (cf. ver. 20), by claiming to be Paul's man, but in deed, by being ready to suffer such pain and shame as I have suffered (vv. 11-13). There is not one standard of duty and suffering for an apostle, and another for the members of the church : they are all to be imitators of him.

17. Paul was so much in earnest in his desire that they should learn to imitate him, that he had sent Timothy to instruct them, or rather to refresh their memories. **That is why I have sent you Timothy, who is my child, beloved and faithful in the Lord** (or my beloved child [cf. ver. 14] and faithful in the Lord). Love and fidelity reach their purest and highest in the Lord : the phrase means rather more than "in the sphere of Christian duty." It is fitting that Paul should send a beloved child to his beloved children (ver. 14) ; and this child is one who will put you in mind of my ways that are in Christ—their conduct showed that they had forgotten those ways, and Timothy would remind them no doubt by example as

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

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well as by precept. Paul's ways, manner of life, were in accordance with his teaching; they were such as I teach not only at Corinth, but **everywhere in every church**. So the demands he makes upon, and the standard he sets for, the Corinthian church, are not special and peculiar: they are the ideals he holds before all the churches.

**18-21.** Apparently Paul's sending of Timothy had led some of the Corinthians to believe that he was afraid to face them himself; but he promptly disabuses their mind of that idea. Under the impression that I am not coming myself some have become puffed up—a common failing of the Corinthians (ver. 6); but come I will to you, and that very soon,—though he arranges to stay at Ephesus till after Pentecost is over (xvi. 8)—if the Lord will (cf. xvi. 7), He, on whose will all human action is contingent (cf. James iv. 15). It is difficult to say whether the will here is that of Christ, who is *the Lord* in ver. 17, or of God (cf. i. 1). And, as spiritual father of the Corinthian church, with regard to those who have been and still are puffed up (perf.), I will take cognizance not of their words—the ready Greeks had always enough of these on hand—but of their power, their effectiveness. For it is not the talkers, but the men of spiritual power who advance the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God does not rest or consist in talk, but in power. What will ye have then? I am coming in any case: it is for you to say how. Is it armed with a rod of correction that I am to come to you, or in love and a spirit of gentleness? There would be *love* in either case, for he is their father (ver. 15), and the hand that wielded the rod would be a fatherly hand: but the question is whether that love shall express itself in chastisement or gentleness.

THE SOCIAL MORALITY OF THE  
CORINTHIAN CHURCH (v.-vii.)

## CHAPTER V

1 IT is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

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*A Case of Incest (v. 1-8).*

From the discussion of the party question, which, though it had subtle effects on moral life, was, on the whole, a religious rather than a moral question, Paul now passes to the consideration of the more distinctively moral life of the Corinthian church, which, on some of its levels, was low enough ; and the *rod* with which in iv. 21, the apostle threatens to come to them, is only too intelligible.

1. In a city so completely given over as was Corinth to the worship of Aphrodite (Venus), the large place given in the letter to the discussion of sexual relationships and sins is not surprising, and it is natural that this part of the letter should be introduced by the discussion of a particularly flagrant offence. There is actually a report of fornication among you, yes (*kai*) and fornication the like of which does not (exist) even among the Gentiles, namely, that a man should have, whether as wife or concubine, his father's wife. Paul is indignant that the Christian church should have fallen below even the low standard of the Pagan world, and we may assume that this act, or at any rate the indifference if not satisfaction, with which it was received by the church, arose from a false conception of the Christian liberty preached by Paul. About the crime itself there is much that is obscure. Was the father's wife the man's own mother or his stepmother ? Almost certainly the latter, as the word *mother* would certainly have

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

been chosen to point the horror of the crime. But that the crime was horrible enough is indicated by the use of the phrase *the father's wife* in preference to stepmother. Again was the woman a Christian or not? Probably not, as Paul's disciplinary proposals are directed exclusively against the man? Again, was the father dead or not? This point is not certain; it depends upon whether he is to be identified with "the man that suffered the wrong" in 2 Cor. vii. 12. Again, is the implication that he *had* this woman as wife or concubine? This point is also uncertain, as *εχειν* can be used of either relationship; and the phrases in vv. 2, 3, "he that had done this deed," "he that hath so wrought this thing," do not point decisively in either direction. In any case, the union of a man with his stepmother was condemned by Greek, Roman (*εθνεσιν*) and Jewish opinion (Lev. xviii. 8). The translation in A.V., "not so much as *named*," rests upon *ονομαζεται*, which is an unwarranted interpolation in the text.

2. An act which would have been an offence to Pagan society, ought surely to have shocked sensitive Christian opinion. But the Corinthian church, whether by virtue of the low moral ideals brought over by the converts from paganism, or of misconceptions of what was involved in Christian liberty, was not easily shocked. As for **YOU** (*ὑμεῖς*) ye are puffed up, in a state of inflation (perf. *πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ*), a state apparently chronic to the Corinthians (iv. 6, 18). Things must have been bad indeed if the Corinthians were puffed up *because of* the crime. This is not quite impossible, as such a crime would be the best proof that they meant what they said when they claimed "liberty" for themselves as Christians. But it is not necessary to suppose this, and the Greek tense (unlike *ἔφυσιώθησαν*, in iv. 18) is rather against it. The meaning may simply be that the crime was accompanied by (not that it produced) a feeling of inflation on the part of the church. As the next clause suggests, instead of being sorry, they maintained their state of inflation. And ye did not rather fall to mourning (aor.) and, in your penitence, take steps that the man who wrought this deed be

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 To deliver such a one unto Satan for the

**removed from your midst**—by themselves, as ver. 13 shows ; in other words that he be excommunicated. There is something impressive and solemn about the double formal allusion to the man in vv. 2, 3 as “the one who had done this thing.” It is possible—and some argue, from the use of *οὐχι*, more natural—to read this verse interrogatively : “are ye puffed up, and did ye not rather mourn ?”

3. With the laxity of the Corinthians, Paul contrasts his own decision *ἐγὼ μὲν* : for I on my part, **absent in the body but present in the spirit**—that spirit which was illuminated through association with the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus (ver. 4)—have already come to a decision, as though I were actually present, with regard to the man who in this way perpetrated this crime (ver. 3). *κέκρικα* seems to combine two constructions : I have *judged* this man, and I have *decided* to deliver such a one to Satan (*παραδοῦναι*, ver. 5). One would hardly expect Paul to judge a man on hearsay (*ἀκούεται*, ver. 1) evidence : either he regards himself as specially enlightened through his association with (*σὺν*) the spirit of Jesus, or, as Ramsay says, “the words ‘I have judged him’ do not imply a legal judgment, but an expression of Paul’s opinion on a mere report of the case.” It makes little difference whether we take *ὡς παρών* to mean, “as though actually present” or “as being present” (that is in spirit). Does *οὕτως* (*thus*) mean thus shamefully, or Christian though he be by profession ?

4, 5. Paul’s decision is given with great deliberation ; clause follows clause with unusual solemnity, and the reader is held in breathless suspense till the fateful word *παραδοῦναι* is reached. The judgment is, in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you have gathered together, and my spirit, in asso-

destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

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ciation with the power of our Lord Jesus, TO DELIVER HIM THAT IS SUCH TO SATAN. The phrase *in the name of our Lord Jesus* may grammatically go either with "gathered" or "deliver": similarly the phrase *with the power of our Lord Jesus*. It seems, on the whole, best to take the latter phrase with "gathered," and the former with "deliver." The decision is in the name of Jesus to deliver him to Satan, after the Corinthians have assembled with the spirit of the absent Paul in association with that of Jesus. All things were to be done by Christians in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. iii. 17), *a fortiori* acts of such grave and solemn importance (cf. Acts iii. 6); the utterance of the name of Jesus was probably believed to summon His presence and power (Acts iii. 16). It is not quite clear whether the phrase *with the power of Jesus* goes closely with *my spirit*, implying that Paul's spirit was sustained and illumined by association with the spirit of Jesus, or whether it implies that the power of Jesus, as a separate entity, was independently present (you . . . and my spirit . . . together with the power of Jesus). It is interesting to note the importance here attached to the convocation of the Corinthian church: this is one of the factors in the decision. The constitution of the church is what we might call democratic; they have, as we see in ver. 13, the right and the duty to keep their membership pure.

5. It is worthy of note that Paul does not actually say that he decides to hand the culprit over to Satan; but *τὸν τούτον*, such a one, a man of this kind. What is meant by "delivering a man to Satan"? We here touch a circle of ideas that forcibly remind us that we are reading an ancient document. Satan is the great adversary of God; consequently sickness and disease, as evil things, are often ascribed to him. It was he who brought calamity and leprosy upon Job (Job i. ii.), and who had "bound" the woman whom Jesus healed in the Synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke xiii. 16). The sinner is here delivered to Satan for destruction of the flesh, and these illustrations show that such a work would be peculiarly congenial to him. Further, the strange authority claimed by the apostle

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

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is paralleled elsewhere: Hymenaeus and Alexander are similarly delivered (*παρέδωκα*) to Satan, that they may be disciplined (1 Tim. i. 20). The power of an apostle's word is illustrated by the stories of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v.), and the blindness that fell upon Elymas (Acts xiii. 11); so this judgment of Paul is to be conceived as carrying potency with it. Possibly, however, as Ramsay suggests, the meaning may be less terrible: the phrase may be formed on the analogy of the formulæ by which a Greek, who had been wronged, sometimes "consigned the criminal to the God, and left the punishment to be inflicted by divine power . . . If there subsequently befell him any bodily suffering, it would be regarded as the divine act, to the end that he might repent and learn" (*Expositor*, 1900, pp. 212 f.). It is appropriate here that the *flesh* should be destroyed, as that was at once the seat and the source of the sin; but in no case could flesh inherit the kingdom of God (xv. 50). Probably the idea is that he is to die by slow disease. Satan, though now the adversary of God, was once regarded as His servant (cf. Job i. 6); and even now his "destructive" work is overruled for good. The flesh is to be destroyed that the spirit—the highest part of man—may be saved in the day of the Lord, in the day when Jesus comes in judgment to decide the destinies of men (i. 8). This solemn decision of Paul has, therefore, in view the sinner's ultimate salvation.

6. In view of so great an offence, continues Paul, on the part of one of your members, this glorying of yours is not seemly. Do you not know—perhaps another ironical allusion to their much vaunted knowledge (cf. iii. 16)—that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? The lump is the Christian community; what is the leaven? Is it the sin described in the last paragraph, or the Corinthian conceit and moral laxity (cf. ver. 2). If the former, it would be strange to find Paul characterize so grave an offence, and one upon which he pronounces so terrible a doom, as a *little* leaven, unless indeed the word is to be taken quantitatively rather than qualitatively: probably therefore the leaven is, as ver. 8 suggests, the moral indifference and depravity of the Corinthians themselves.

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

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7, 8. Considering then the danger to the lump from the leaven, it was only common prudence to **cleanse out the old leaven completely, that ye may be a new lump, seeing that** (lit. even as, in accordance with the fact that) **ye are**—not indeed really, as is only too plain, but at any rate ideally and by profession—**free from leaven** of this sinful kind. The proof that you are, or ought to be, thus *unleavened* is that **our passover lamb has been sacrificed, even Christ**; and just as, according to the Mosaic law (Exod. xii. 15 ff., xiii. 7), the sacrifice of the passover lamb was accompanied by complete abstinence for seven days from everything leavened, so among Christians, the sacrifice of Christ, their passover lamb, was incompatible with the leaven of sin. The casual reference to leaven in ver. 6 causes Paul to draw out the figure to considerable length; and this alone is sufficient to account for the exhortation, **so then let us keep the festival.** We need not suppose that he is thinking of the celebration of the passover at Corinth, though the letter may well have been written about passover time (cf. xvi. 8). “All time,” says Chrysostom, “is a festival season to Christians”; and this unending festival has to be kept **not with old leaven, brought by the Corinthians from their old pagan life, nor with leaven of evil and wickedness**, like the fornification on the one hand, and their indifference to it on the other, **but with the unleavened bread of transparency and truth.** It has been conjectured that this insistence upon sincerity, transparency, is a rebuke of their possibly wilful misunderstanding of his previous letter, which he now proceeds to discuss.

This glimpse into the Corinthian church throws a lurid light upon the moral ideals and attainments of her members. The

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators :

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters ; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

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“old leaven” of paganism, and their misconception of the Christian calling, combined to produce a caricature of the true church which goes far to explain the solemn and terrible earnestness with which Paul rebukes the church and especially her most conspicuous sinner.

*The Church and the World : a Letter Misunderstood (v. 9-13).*

Other letters were written by Paul to the Corinthian church than those which have been preserved (2 Cor. x. 10) : in particular one had been written before the first canonical epistle, in which, as here, he had given instructions to the Corinthians about the conduct of their moral life. The “fornicator” must have been an unhappily frequent figure on the streets of Corinth. He could hardly be avoided ; what was to be the attitude of church members to him and such as he ? This passage appropriately follows the last which dealt with immorality within the church itself.

9, 10. **I wrote to you**—not in this letter (vv. 2, 6, for example, are not specific enough to meet the case), but—in the letter which I sent you before, **not to associate with immoral people.** Some have supposed that a fragment of the letter alluded to survives in 2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1. In 2 Cor. vii. 8, Paul refers apparently to 1 Cor. in a phrase identical with that used here—*in the letter.* He thought the meaning of such advice was plain on the face of it : in giving it (**I did**) not at all (**mean**) that they were to have nothing to do with the immoral people of this, that is, the non-Christian, world, or with the greedy and rapacious (one class, under one article τοῖς : the ἀρπαγεῖς are the unscrupulously covetous) or with idolaters. That would have been absurd, for two reasons : (i) because Corinth teemed with such people, and the ordinary business of life must have involved perpetual contact with them ; and (ii) because Christianity can only influence society

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such a one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

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by contact with it : here again, a little leaven will, in time, leaven the whole lump (cf. Matt. xiii. 33, Luke xiii. 21). Such advice, then, would have been out of the question, **for in that case, you would have had to leave the world.**

11. But as a matter of fact, what I really meant, when I wrote to you, was this. The words may equally well mean ; *But now*—to avoid all misunderstanding—I write to you not to, etc. (the so-called epistolary aorist). In either case, what Paul meant (or means) is this : if a man bearing the name of Christian brother, that is, a church member, be given to immorality, or greed, or idolatry, or abuse, or drunkenness, or rapacity, you are not to associate with that sort of man nor even to eat with him. The purity of the church must be preserved at all costs, and all intercourse with men of this type, even friendly acts of hospitality, were to be suspended ; they were brothers only *in name*. If this catalogue of sins gives us a real glimpse into the composition of the Corinthian church, no measures could be too drastic for its purification.

12, 13. But Paul makes it plain that he claims no jurisdiction beyond the church. For what business is it of mine to judge those that are outside? I act just as you act yourselves. Is that not your own practice (*ὑμεῖς*)—to judge those that are inside, while of those that are outside neither you, nor I, but God is the judge (*κρίνει*, better read as present than future, *κρίνεται*). Is there a touch of irony in the phrase “ ye judge those that are within ” ? In the flagrant case

## CHAPTER VI

I DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints ?

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upon which Paul pronounces so heavy a judgment (vv. 3-5), so far were they from judging it that they regarded it with indifference and even conceit. Hence Paul's peremptory command in conclusion : **Remove the wicked man from your own midst** (ver. 13). Excommunicate all such (cf. ver. 11),—in particular he is thinking of the sinner who had taken his father's wife. Over wicked men beyond the pale of the church you have no judicial powers ; but it is your solemn duty (cf. Deut. xxiv. 7) to purify the church.

The church must respect her ideals and take practical steps to conserve them. Her members must not "go out of the world" which it is their duty to leaven, but she must send out of her communion those who, by a deliberately sinful life, have betrayed her and her Lord. And the apostle leaves it to the members of the church to effect this excommunication. In Paul's conception of church polity, the members count for much (cf. ver. 4).

*Christian Disputes and Heathen Courts (vi. 1-11).*

This epistle glides easily and naturally from one topic to another. The incidental reference to "judging" in ch. v. 12, suggests the larger question of litigation, and the relation of the Corinthian Christians to the ordinary legal processes and law courts. Is a Christian at liberty to avail himself of these, in case of a dispute between himself and a brother Christian ? In spite of the indefinite *τις* in ver. 1, the plurals in the following verses (cf. ver. 7, "Ye have lawsuits with one another"), and the earnestness of the whole discussion, strongly suggest that this point had been practically raised several times.

**i. Does any of you, that has a matter in dispute with another Christian have the hardihood to go to law before (the) unrighteous judges, instead of before (the) saints ?**

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

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To do this is an act of effrontery (*τολμαῖ*) to the *brotherly* spirit that ought to animate the Christian church (cf. vv. 6, 8), besides being, at bottom, an ethical absurdity; for why should men who have been *justified* (*ἐδικαιωθητε* v. 11) go before the *unjust* (*ἄδικοι*) for *justice*? Christians who are called to be *saints* (i. 2), should have any disputes that may arise settled by men of their own type. The characterization of the heathen judges as *unjust* is not to be taken too seriously; there may be a touch of irony in it; the word is simply = *unbeliever* (ver. 6). Paul had a real respect for properly constituted authority (Rom. xiii. 1) and himself appealed to Cæsar. The disputes about which Paul is thinking are, in particular, those that concern property (ver. 8); and the materialistic spirit, which such litigation revealed, was the very contradiction of the spirit which should be theirs, as Christians. The Greeks were fond of litigation, with its discussions and excitements; and it would not be easy for them to shake themselves free of this disposition, even after they became Christians.

2, 3. **Or**, continues Paul, if you persist in this practice, it must be because you have forgotten that, in the divine economy, *you* are the real judges of the world. **Do you not know**—this phrase occurs six times in this chapter (vv. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19), and probably always in this letter with a slightly ironical flavour: men so *wise* as you Corinthians ought to know this—that the *saints shall judge* (*κρινοῖσιν*, fut., better than *κρίνονται*, judge) the world. Ramsay (*Expositor*, 1900, p. 279) maintains that “an undertone of sarcasm, almost of banter, is to be understood as ruling throughout vi. 2–4,” and that we do not here have “a serious description of the future powers and duties of Christians.” This may be: a playful thrust of this kind would be quite in the manner of Paul. But on the other hand, the reference can be explained in terms of contemporary belief. According to Dan. vii. 22, judgment was to be given to the

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

saints of the Most High ; and when the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory, those who had followed Him were also to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 30). The privilege of judging would be theirs when the Messianic kingdom had come (cf. iv. 8). And if **THE WORLD** (*ὁ κόσμος*, emphatic) appears before you (*ἐν ὑμῖν*, in or through an assembly of yours) for judgment, are ye then unworthy of sitting upon the smallest tribunals—that is, tribunals where petty cases are tried. The future judges of the world should surely be capable of judging trifles. Verse 3 repeats this thought in other words: do ye not know that we are to judge not only men but angels—the two together make up the world (iv. 9)—to say nothing at all of ordinary things (lit. the things of ordinary *life*: (cf. Luke xxi. 34).

4. Whatever this verse means, it is at any rate spoken “to shame” the Corinthians, and this may give some clue to its interpretation. The question turns (a) upon whether *those who are of no account in the church* are the heathen judges or insignificant members of the church, and (b) upon whether *καθίζετε* is indicative or imperative. If then it is ordinary cases (*βιωτικά*, very emphatic; echo of last word of last sentence) that you have to try, what then? In that case, either (a) appoint insignificant church members to settle such disputes,—the humblest abilities will be adequate for such a task ; or (b) you appoint heathen judges to settle such disputes. (The latter alternative may also be read as a question : do you appoint ?) (b) seems the more vigorous interpretation : it is those who are of no account in the church—it is these (*τούτους*, emphatic) whom you set on the judge’s seat. Men who were destined to judge angels, went for the settlement of trivial affairs to heathen judges : I speak to shame you. There are two difficulties in this interpretation, neither of which is insurmountable. (i) *καθίζετε* is inappropriate, as the Christians did not appoint the heathen judges : but the word might well be used loosely—especially as the feeling throughout is tense—

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

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for the deliberate recognition of the heathen judge: these are (or are these?) the men you *set* over the decision of your disputes: (ii) It is said that "those who are of no account in the church" would be an unlikely phrase for Paul to apply to the ordinary Greek judges (cf. Rom. xiii. 1). But (a) it would be almost equally unlikely, on the other view, to apply to a Christian brother; and (b) it is really no more objectionable than the epithet "unrighteous" in ver. 1. Such men were of no account in the church, as the members of the church were of no account in the world (*ξενθερημένα*, i. 28, same word).

5, 6. If the Corinthians take their cases before heathen judges, where, asks Paul satirically, is their own much vaunted wisdom? Is there such an utter lack of wisdom among you, not a single wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren (lit. *his brother*: apparently used loosely). Instead of that, however, brother goes to law with brother—bad enough in itself, for it is a contradiction of the spirit of Christian brotherhood, but infinitely aggravated by the fact that they took their cases before judges who were not Christians—and that before unbelievers (ver. 6). Brethren should settle disputes in a *brotherly* spirit—without the apparatus of courts, but, at most, by arbitration, by appealing to the "decision" of some other "wise" and impartial brother. The question begun in ver. 5 may also be taken as continued into ver. 6; so Amer. R.V.

In verses 7, 8, Paul cuts to the root of the matter. For Christians to take their disputes before unbelievers was deplorable; but more deplorable still was it that they should have disputes of this kind at all—it was nothing less than

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, not extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

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a moral *defect*. Nay, at the outset, it is nothing short of a defect on *your* part that you have lawsuits with one another at all. It shows that you do not clearly understand what is involved in allegiance to Christ; with those who are His, the spiritual must be paramount, and their life will not consist in the abundance of the things that they possess. In that case, why do you, if you are truly His, not rather bear the wrong? why not bear the robbery? But—so far from that—you yourselves (*ὑμεῖς*), brethren and Christ's own though you profess to be, are guilty of the wrong and robbery, yes, and towards brethren too.

9, 10. You wise Corinthians seem to have forgotten where all this wrongdoing ends. You may score a paltry success in the courts, but it will shut you out of a title to *God's* kingdom. Or do you not know that wrongdoers—the very word (*ἀδικοι*) he had applied in ver. 1 to the heathen judges; that is the level to which such conduct reduces them—shall not inherit God's kingdom? It was easy for the Corinthians, in their frivolous, immoral city, to forget the stern demands of the religion they professed; but do not deceive yourselves; for they certainly shall not inherit the kingdom of God, whether their wrongdoing take the form of immorality or greed—for these are the chief classes of sins covered by the following list—neither fornicators nor idolaters (idolatry appropriately mentioned at this point, as the cult of Aphrodite in Corinth was immoral) nor adulterers, nor those who practise or lend themselves to unnatural lust, nor thieves, nor greedy men, nor any given to drunkenness, reviling, or extortion.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

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11. **And such** (lit. these things), in the past, **were** not indeed all, but **some of you**: this goes a long way to explain the facility with which the Corinthians relapsed into lower moral ideals and practices, and also to illustrate the degradation out of which the gospel had to lift men; **but**, as it was the power of God, it had transformed them, when, in the rite of baptism, they had signified their acceptance of it: **you have washed yourselves** (or you had yourselves washed): the reference is to baptism [cf. Acts xxii. 16], the aor. indicating the moment (not "ye are washed," as A.V.), and the middle indicating the Corinthian response to the divine call. **Yes** (*ἀλλά*, *but*: repeated with great emphasis) **you were sanctified, yes, you were justified**. These words do not here mean "*made* holy, and *made* righteous"—context, and (at least in the case of *δικαιοῦν*) usage are against this—but simply, "*set apart and justified*"; the same act is described from two points of view, in an order the reverse of the usual one. These words are appropriately in the passive, because they indicate the result of the divine action upon the Corinthian believers. All these three acts—baptism, sanctification and justification—**were effected in the name of the (or our) Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God**. In particular, baptism is in the name of Jesus (the Trinitarian formula is not yet in use, Matt. xxviii. 19), and sanctification is the work of the spirit; but more generally, the last two clauses are to be taken with all three verbs. The new life depends both upon God and Jesus.

Here again, as in his discussion of the party spirit (ch. iii.), Paul, by a simple contrast between the unlovely reality and the glorious Christian facts, produces an effect more powerful than a direct rebuke. The unbrotherly conduct of the Corinthians in wronging one another, and in carrying their paltry disputes before heathen courts, is so utterly unworthy of men who have been baptized, justified and sanctified, that they

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

must have been instantly struck by its incongruity. Indeed their conduct shows how poorly they have learned the lesson of Him in whose name they have been baptized, and is imperilling their chances of the kingdom of heaven. Again we feel the tremendous moral earnestness which breathes through the words of Paul: the heirs of that kingdom must be men with no taint of lust or greed upon their souls.

Paul is not here pleading for ecclesiastical *courts*, to rival the civil courts of the heathen. What he desiderates is not more machinery, or another organization, but another spirit, the spirit of *brotherliness*—not a Christian court, but the arbitration of a wise Christian brother. This is the only course worthy of men who have been baptized and sanctified.

*The Limit of Liberty* (vi. 12–20).

The return to the subject of immorality, which Paul had already discussed in the preceding chapter, shows how subtly and seriously Paul conceived the life of the Corinthian church to be menaced by the usages of ordinary society. Besides the practical temptations to which the members of the church were continually exposed, they were subject to the almost more dangerous temptation of justifying theoretically a loose attitude to morality, and even of resting their justification upon words of the apostle's own. This is the situation which he meets in the ensuing paragraph.

**12. All things are in my power.** These are words probably borrowed by the Corinthians from Paul himself, and were probably often on their lips, cf. x. 23. Plainly Paul did not literally mean that everything was lawful; such a union as that of ver. 16, for example, was not only the degradation, but the destruction of the believer's relation to Christ. But all things that are morally indifferent are as lawful to him as to anybody: still he will not make indiscriminate use of this wide liberty; of the things which are lawful he will adopt only such as are profitable, to himself or to others.

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body.

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There is a play on the words *ἴξεστιν* and *ἴξουσιασθήσομαι*. All things are in my *power*: true, but they are not all profitable. All things are in my power : true, but I, for my part (*ἐγώ*) will not let myself be brought under the power of anything. He must not only be free, he must remain free : he is not free to forfeit his freedom. He must be the master of all things, he must not allow any of them to become his master : he is not free, for example, to join himself to a harlot, or to any other person or influence that estranges him from Christ. There his freedom ends.

13. Some of the Greeks, however, appear to have argued that one appetite is as much entitled to satisfaction as another. The bodily appetite has its gratification in something outside of it ; each is made for, and adapted to, the other. For example, **meats for the belly and the belly for meats** ; that appetite demands satisfaction, and finds it legitimately in food. By easy analogy it might then be argued : the body for fornication, and fornication for the body—for why should that appetite also, like the other, not be satisfied in that way ? There were two errors in this reasoning, argues Paul. Firstly, there is no real analogy between meats and the stomach on the one hand, and the body on the other ; the former belonged to the evanescent order—**God shall bring to nought both it and them**, for *the fashion of this world passeth away* (vii. 31) ; the body, on the other hand, belongs to the eternal order—it shall be raised up (ver. 14, cf. xv.). But secondly, **the body is NOT for fornication, but for the Lord** ; and the Lord for the body. The body is an instrument for the service of the Lord ; in and through the body we carry out His will upon the earth. And the Lord is for the body ; as He needs it, so it needs Him. “Without Him the body cannot develop into all it is intended to be.” Between the two there is a mutual dependence ; and the only argument, legitimate to a Christian, that can be drawn from the wonderful adaptation of appetites to their means of gratification, is that

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of a harlot? God forbid.

*his body is for the use of the Lord, and the Lord for the redemption of his body.*

14. The correspondence between 13b and 14, each beginning with *οὐ δὲ Θεός*, is very striking, and forms part of the argument. *God will destroy it and them*: but us, that is, our body, He will raise up, because He raised up the Lord. The argument would have been clearer, as Lietzmann says, if Paul had written “our bodies” instead of “us.” The double *kai* is intended to connect very closely *us* and *Him*, to involve us in His experience of resurrection. **But God both raised up the Lord and He will raise us up also through His power**—for He is omnipotent. The body is distinguished here, as usually in Paul, from the flesh, and therefore from the *κοιλία* (belly); flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but the body is raised, spiritual and glorious (ch. xv.).

So for two reasons, the Corinthian analogy falls to the ground; the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and it will not be reduced to nothing, but raised and “conformed to the body of His glory” (Phil. iii. 21).

15. **Do you not know—you ought to know—that your bodies are members of Christ,** identified with Him as closely as the hand is identified with the body. **Shall I then**—a question all the more striking, that he puts it in the first person instead of in the second—**take away the members of my body, which, as I am Christ's, are also the members of Christ, and make them a harlot's members?** The very supposition is too awful to contemplate. **God forbid:** these words give the flavour of *μη γένοιτο* here (“let it not happen”). Christ and the harlot are here conceived as the rival claimants of the human soul: a man cannot at the same time belong to both. If his members be given to the harlot, they must be taken (*ἀπασ*) from Christ.

16 What! know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

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16, 17. **Or do you not know**—the fact is plain enough to one who remembers his Bible—that he that cleaves to a harlot ( $\tauῆ$ , the particular woman with whom he is sinning) is one body?—not two; the act constitutes a real identity of the man with his partner. For in Genesis ii. 24, Scripture (or God: in reality Adam) says, the two shall become one flesh. The original reference is to marriage; but the act that creates the identity is the same. Now there is an equally real union— $\kappaολλώμενος$ , the same word, is used—between the believer and the Lord, but it is a *spiritual* one—**But he that cleaveth to the Lord is one**—the argument almost leads us to expect *body*; but Paul substitutes—**spirit**—The Christian is moving in another world altogether than that of the flesh with its appetites and lusts.

18. Paul now gathers up the argument in a brief, impassioned warning, the more peremptory that there is no connecting particle: **flee fornication**: do not fight, but flee. Victory over this sin lies in retreat. In some ways it is the most deadly sin of all: for **every act of sin that a man may commit is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body**. This has seemed to some the language of exaggeration; for is drunkenness, even gluttony, not also a sin against a man's own body? Undoubtedly; but not in the same awful sense. To appreciate the true heinousness of immorality, as Paul understood it, we must remember the terrible contrast in verses 16, 17. The essence of it is a definite and deliberate union, by means of the body, with the  $\piόρνη$ , who is the rival and enemy of Christ; the immoral man, has, by this union, alienated his ethical and religious personality—alienated it by means of the body which was given him to

19 What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

express that personality in the service of the Lord: for *the body is for the Lord*. Relatively speaking, then, such sins as drunkenness are external, while this sin cleaves to the roots of the ethical being, and is a fearful and radical contradiction of the idea of Christian personality.

19. The body against which the immoral man sins, is his own; therein lies the folly of his sin. But it is not his own, it is the Lord's, and it is God's: therein lies the horror of it. **Or do you not know**, as a Christian ought to know, **that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you?** Paul has already made use of this thought, and given a collective turn to it: "ye—the church as a whole—are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you—as a whole" (iii. 16). Here the application is personal and individual. The holy spirit—what a gift and what a giver! none other than God Himself: it is the spirit which **ye have from God**: and how shall this holy spirit dwell in an unholy, desecrated body?

20. **Besides, you are not your own** at all. Paul had just spoken of the man's body as his own; in the deepest sense, this is not true. You do not belong to yourselves; for **you were bought**—bought by God—and you therefore belong to Him who bought you: the price was paid to the law (Gal. iii. 13). Bought **with a price**; the simple word is more effective than if the apostle had said, "with a great price," though this is the meaning; for the *price* (*τιμή*) is the *precious* (*τιμων*) blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 19; cf. Eph. i. 7).

The negative warning of ver. 18 is now followed by a positive appeal: not only flee fornication, but—as your bodies are not your own, but God's—glorify God **then**, not only in your spirit, but also **in your body**, especially by chastity. The body, which is the Lord's, must be so used as to contribute to the glory of God. The words *kai ἐν τῷ πνεύματι*

## CHAPTER VII

i Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

*ὑμῶν, ἄτινά ἔστι τοῦ Θεοῦ* ("and in your spirit, which are God's") are a gloss.

Paul's arguments against the immoral licence apparently claimed by some of the Corinthians are brief but very trenchant. The fundamental passion of the Christian should be for his Lord ; and every passion inconsistent with that should be "fled." To indulge in immorality is to ignore the fact that the body is for the Lord—His instrument and servant : it is to identify one's self with a principle and a person alien to Christ : it is to sin even against the body itself, by using it to violate the Christian personality it was intended to express : it is to outrage the rights of the God who bought us by the precious blood of His Son.

*The Marriage Question (vii. 1-40).*

At this point Paul begins to deal specifically with questions raised by the Corinthian letter to which his own is a reply (cf. ver. 25 ; viii. 1) ; and the present discussion of marriage appropriately follows the discussion of sexual morality with which the previous chapter had concluded. Much injustice has been done to Paul by forgetting that this chapter (vii.) was not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the marriage question. It is a reply to certain questions raised by the Corinthians ; the whole discussion has to be read in the light of the opening clause—*Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote* (ver. 1). No doubt this chapter would be much clearer, if we had the letter to which Paul is replying. It can only be reconstructed by conjecture, and with regard to its contents and spirit there is room for wide difference of opinion. Temptations to immorality abounded in Corinth : the Christian conscience was practically exercised by the problem how they were best to be met. Some scholars hold that the Corinthians had proposed celibacy as a solution ; others, that their solution

2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

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lay in universal marriage. However that may be, the incompleteness of the discussion is explained by the fact that it is a reply to questions raised in a letter ; and the defence of marriage as a safe-guard against immorality (ver. 2)—a defence so much lower than we should have expected from Paul—is explained by the fact that he is writing to the inhabitants of a notoriously immoral city. Paul's own view of marriage was much more exalted than we should be inclined to gather from this chapter, and receives its noblest expression in Ephesians, ch. v.

It has further to be remembered that when Paul wrote, he was looking for the speedy coming of Christ. The time was shortened (ver. 29) ; the fashion of this world was passing away (ver. 31) : and marriage meant new cares, distractions and entanglements. The more *free from care* (ver. 32) a man was, the more free was he for the service of his Lord. Thus the discussion is as remote as it could be from an abstract treatment of the question : it is governed throughout by local and temporal considerations, and can only be properly understood in the light of them.

#### *Marriage or Celibacy ? (vii. 1-7).*

1, 2. Now (the δέ passes to a new subject or phrase of the subject) concerning the things you wrote me about, I have to say that it is good for a man not to touch a woman, that is, to lead a celibate life. He says it is good (*καλόν*), he does not here say that it is best, nor even that it is better than something else (but see ver. 38) : but simply that it is good, seemly—apparently as against some one who had thought or said that it was not good, but bad, unseemly. Paul is not arguing against marriage : he is simply defending celibacy against its detractors. *ἀνθρώπῳ*, *for a human being*, generalizes the statement, as the following verse shows. Still, good as celibacy is, it is not advisable in such a place as Corinth : there, on account of the notorious immoralities

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence ; and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to

(pl.) let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her proper husband (ver. 2). It is not simply that each *may* have, but in such an immoral atmosphere, he *ought* to have a consort. There is a real, but not a serious difference between *own* and *proper*—the husband is the head of the wife : but the whole discussion shows that contrary to Jewish and Greek opinion, there is to be in Christianity an essential equality between husband and wife. This relatively low justification of marriage is explained by the situation at Corinth, where, with the prevalent worship of Aphrodite, temptations would be unusually abundant.

3, 4. To the wife—mentioned first (cf. ver. 10)—let the husband pay the debt of conjugal duty, and in like manner also the wife to the husband. The reading (*ἀφειλομένην εὑροιαν*) on which A.V. (*due benevolence*) is based, is a gloss on *ἀφειλήν*, which means a debt (Mat. xviii. 32)—here the conjugal debt. Married people are not to live like celibates: each owes the other a debt which has to be paid. For the wife has no authority over her own body, but the husband—it is her own, yet not her own : and in like manner also the husband has no authority over his own body, but the wife—it is his own, yet not his own. Here again, as in ver. 3, the balance of clauses, and the use of *ὅμοιως*, show how completely the sexes are conceived by Paul as on an equality.

5. Do not rob one another, then, of the debt which ought to be paid—to withhold it is *fraud*. But while the Corinthians must frankly, and without attempting an unwise asceticism, acknowledge the facts, they must not forget the greatest fact of all—religion, and in their married life provision must be made for it, though Paul suggests the provision in a very

fasting and prayer ; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

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modest and tentative fashion—unless it should be perhaps by mutual consent and temporarily : the abstinence has to be only *for a season*, to it both (*σὺν*) parties are to be agreed, and the object of it is, that ye may be free for the exercise of special prayer (*προσευχή* has the article, as has the corresponding plur. word in Acts ii. 42). The aorist (*σχολάσητε*) suggests special occasions : the relations suspended by these seasons of prayer have to be resumed—and that ye may be together again. A somewhat lurid light is cast upon the excitability of the Corinthian temperament by the reason assigned for this special advice : it is that Satan may not tempt you by reason of your incontinence. The standing nature of the temptation is suggested by the present (*πειράζῃ*). Fasting is a later ascetic interpolation, exactly as in Mark ix. 29.

6, 7. Paul is well aware that all men have not the splendid self-restraint which he himself enjoys—he wishes they had ; and his advice is given as a concession to the weakness of human nature, especially of Greek nature exposed to Corinthian temptations. And this—apparently embracing all the instructions in vv. 2–5 regarding the practical necessity of marriage—I say by way of concession, not by way of commandment. The meaning is not that Paul gave these instructions by permission of, though not at the commandment of, the Lord ; but that his own words are to be understood as a concession, not as an injunction to the Corinthians. Such concessions would not be necessary, if men were not incontinent (cf. *ἀκρασία*, 5 ; *διὰ τὰς πορνείας*, 2), if they had Paul's purity and self-control : I wish that all men were like ME. The meaning may also be : “Celibacy is a good thing, though, considering the situation, it is well for you to marry,

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows,  
It is good for them if they abide even as I.

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but I wish that all men were *celibate* like myself." But besides perhaps reading too definite a meaning into words which are vague, this interpretation does not connect so well as the other with the following verse : but each man has his own peculiar endowment of grace from God—one in this fashion, another in that. Paul can hardly mean that he has the endowment of celibacy, and another man of marriage—neither of these states could properly be described as a *χάρισμα*—but rather that he has the gift of continence in this regard, while other men have other gifts.

Paul's power of grappling in a practical way with a difficult situation is here finely illustrated. Though an idealist, his feet are always on *terra firma*. He knows human nature through and through ; and he writes with a complete understanding of the average man. He makes no impossible or unnatural demands. He does not expect his readers to conform their lives to his, for the gifts of men differ ; but he expects them to shape those lives with all the facts in view—the fact of weakness and temptation on the one hand (ver. 2), and of religion and its obligations on the other (ver. 5).

#### *Marriage and Separation (vii. 8-17).*

In cases where both of the married people were Christians, and still more where one was a Christian, while the other remained pagan, there would sometimes arise a desire for separation ; the problems thus emerging are considered in this paragraph. But before dealing with them, the apostle briefly directs attention to the case of those who have no partner, whether because they have never been married, or because the partner is dead.

8. **But I say to the unmarried and the widows:** it is seemly (*καλόν*, same word as in ver. 1) for them if they remain as I. This may be fairly taken to imply that Paul was either a bachelor or a widower : there is no proof, and no probability that the *yokefellow* in Phil. iv. 3 was his wife. As the case of widows is dealt with later (ver. 39), it is possible to adopt the suggestion that an original *τοῖς χήραις* (widowers)

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 And unto the married I command, *yet not I, but the Lord*, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband:

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has been altered to the more familiar *widows*. In that case, the two masculine words ("unmarried" and "widowers") might be taken to cover the feminine—the general meaning being "those of either sex who have (now) no partner"; but against that is the fact that the case of "maidens" comes in for separate discussion (vv. 25 ff.). The text is probably correct as it stands.

9. If, like Paul, the unmarried can be continent, *καλόν*, it is well: but, if they have no power over themselves, let them marry: not because of two evils the less should be chosen, for Paul does not say and does not mean that marriage is evil; but because marriage is moral, while desire of this kind is at once dangerous and sinful. For it is better to marry once for all (aorist) than to be continually consumed (pres. tense) by the flames of passion (ver. 9).

10, 11. He now deals with the case of married Christians. Now to those who have, or (almost as we should say) are married: as vv. 12 ff. contemplates the case of mixed marriages, he is thinking here of Christian couples; I give this charge. For what he is about to say, he has the direct authority of the historical Jesus himself (Mat. v. 32, Mark x. 11, Luke xvi. 18): and so, it is really not I, but the Lord, who gives this charge, namely, that wife do not separate herself from husband. The wife may be mentioned first, because she would probably be the more inclined to adopt an ascetic course. But if, for any reason, whether in the interests of a mistaken asceticism, or for some less adequate reason, she do (*kai*, actually) separate, let her, at any rate, on no account marry again, but remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. After this parenthesis contemplating the case of separation, the apostle goes on, and husband (I charge) not to dismiss wife. According to Mat. v. 32, Jesus had prohibited dismissal "save for the cause of fornication." It

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

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is very possible, however, that in the original form of the words, this exception was not made (cf. Mark x. 11, Luke xvi. 18), and that might account for the absolute form of Paul's "charge" here; but it is more probable that Paul is considering separations which have a less serious ground than that of adultery.

12. He now passes to the *remaining* cases—of mixed marriages. **But to the rest**—those couples one of whom was Christian and the other pagan—I say (he does not use the stronger word *charge*, as in ver. 10: he has no definite word of Jesus to go on). **I, not the Lord.** Jesus had no occasion to consider the question of mixed marriages; consequently there is no authoritative word from Him on this subject, as there was on the other, ver. 10. Hence it is not He, but Paul that speaks; but it must not be forgotten that Paul is a "spiritual man," who, as such, "tests all things" (ii. 15). He is still, in that sense, inspired. When, in this passage, he claims that *the Lord* speaks, he does not mean that he himself has been the recipient of a special revelation, but that he rests his statements upon some spoken word of Jesus: when he speaks, and not the Lord, there is no such recorded word of Jesus; nevertheless his statements have all the weight of his inspired personality.

12, 13. What he says is this: **If any Christian brother has a wife that does not believe**—married to him, in all probability, before he became a Christian (Paul is opposed to mixed marriages, 2 Cor. vi. 14 f.)—**and this woman jointly**

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean ; but now are they holy.

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(σύν) **consents to live with him, let him not dismiss her.** There would be every temptation to get rid of an unbelieving partner, on the plea that high Christian life was impossible in union with one who differed so radically on the deepest things ; but even in such a case, the sanctity of the marriage bond is to be upheld. The first step towards separation must not be taken by the Christian partner. The sexes are on an equality ; and therefore, **a woman who has a husband that is an unbeliever, and this man jointly consents to live with her, let her not dismiss her husband.** *ἀφίέναι* is the word commonly used for the dismissal of the woman by the man : the fact that it is used equally of both sexes, together with the fine and studied balance of the clauses, shows how absolutely, in the mind of Paul, the sexes were upon a level in these deeper matters.

14. The divorce of the heathen partner is not to be thought of : **for the unbelieving husband has been sanctified in his union with the Christian wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified in her union with the Christian brother.** The Christian partner is not desecrated by this union, as by the awful union of vi. 15. Again note the balance and repetition of the clauses. In both clauses, the emphatic word is *ἅγιασται*, and the idea is : heathen though the partner be, he (or she) has a certain standing (pf.) of *holiness*. Of course, it is not implied that there was any personal holiness : that is an inner state, and cannot be conferred by an outward union. But the holiness of the one partner is, by the intimacy of their union, thrown about the other, and their marriage is, in some sense, Christian marriage ; **for, were this not so, then it follows that your children are unclean, while as a matter of fact (νῦν) they are holy.** The argument starts from the fact, which is regarded as indisputable, that the children must be considered "holy," even where only one of the parents is a Christian—the principle of family solidarity demands as much ; then it goes on—as the bond with one Christian parent

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

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sanctifies the children, so the bond with one Christian partner sanctifies the other partner. No secure inference can be drawn from this passage regarding infant baptism.

15. The principle has been laid down that one Christian partner must not dismiss the other: but what if the other is eager to go?—a very possible case, where so much of the daily life would be subject to a perpetual challenge, silent or spoken. In that case, if the unbelieving partner is for separation, let him separate. Binding as is the law of marriage, there must be no *slavery* in the matter: in such circumstances the Christian brother or sister is not under bondage; besides, it is in the sphere, or atmosphere (*ἐν*) of peace that God has called you (or *us*). The meaning appears to be: friction will be inevitable with a heathen partner, and this will disturb the peaceful atmosphere of your divine calling (*κέκληκεν*, pf.); therefore if the heathen partner is desirous to go, let him go—his departure will be a contribution to Christian peace.

Much doubt hangs over the meaning of ver. 16: literally, for what do you know, woman, as to whether you shall save your husband? or what do you know, man, as to whether you shall save your wife? This seems to connect naturally with the last verse: as God has called you in peace, and that peace will be not only imperilled but disturbed by a heathen partner, why not consent to his departure? why hold him on the very problematic hope of ultimately saving him? The chief objections to this view are two: (i) the Corinthians needed restraints from, rather than inducements to, facile divorce; and (ii) it would be more like Paul to indulge in the hope of the heathen's ultimate conversion. In accordance with these objections, the verse might conceivably be translated “How do you know whether

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

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you will *not* save him?"—in imitation of the Hebrew construction of *Who knows=perhaps*. Still, the other view seems more in line with the immediate context: life with a person who hated Christianity, would be slavery, and that must not be (ver. 15): the brother or sister is not bound in such a case—let the heathen partner go.

17. It is easy to see, however, how this concession of Paul's might be abused; so, to counteract the facility of separation which his words might have been interpreted as encouraging, he adds the correction that, on the whole, one is to continue in the state in which one was called: **only in each case as the Lord** (that is, Christ) apportioned to him in the past (aor.), **in each case as God has called him** (pf.: the effects of the call are abiding) **so let him walk**. There must indeed be no *bondage* to an inflexible conception of marriage; still, in the main, the *status quo* at the call should be earnestly maintained. Paul's instructions on this matter to the Corinthians differ in no respect from his instructions to the other churches: **and so do I ordain in all the churches**. With the assurance that they are not being treated exceptionally, the Corinthians will do well to submit to this expression of Paul's apostolic authority.

This passage again illustrates Paul's practical power of dealing with concrete situations. He has an exceedingly high conception of the marriage obligation: a Christian is not entitled to separate from a heathen partner who is willing to maintain the union. On the other hand, if the partner refuses to maintain it, there must be no coercion: let him go. Christians are not slaves.

*The Heavenly Calling and the Earthly Station* (vii. 18-24).

The last sentence of the last paragraph, leads by an easy transition to the next; and the principle it enunciated of continuing, in the main, in the state in which one was on receiving the divine call, is applied to other spheres—circumcision, uncircumcision, and slavery.

18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

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18-20. Was one in a condition of circumcision at his call? (lit. was one called as a circumcised man?) In other words, was he a Jew? Let him not, by an operation, have the marks of his circumcision destroyed. This had actually been done by certain Jews in Maccabæan times, as a symbol of their "apostasy from the holy covenant" (1 Macc. i. 15). Circumcision, says Paul, is nothing: one born a Jew may be a good Christian, though he remains as he was at his call. The Gentile needs a similar reminder. Has any one been called in uncircumcision? There was even less reason for him to change his state than for the other. The Jew would at least have been obliterating, as it were, a sectarian sign: the Gentile would have been reverting to such a sign: consequently let him not be circumcised. These things are all outward, and do not affect a man's essential state. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing—a more deliberate and effective statement than "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything": but the keeping of the commandments of God—that is something, indeed everything. Here it might be supposed that Paul is falling into the very externalism which he is combating; and was not circumcision also a commandment? (Gen. xvii. 13). Clearly Paul is thinking of other than ceremonial commandments: his real meaning is illustrated by other two passages in which he similarly deprecates circumcision and uncircumcision, contrasting them, on the one hand, with the new creation (Gal. vi. 15) and, on the other, with *faith working through love* (Gal. v. 6). It is God's commandments we are to observe, not an external service imposed on us by *human lords* (*δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων*, 23b). Therefore, as these external things are of no consequence, in every

21 Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather.

case, in whatever calling a man was called, in that let him remain. It is probably "the calling by which," rather than "*in* which" he was called; for the verb ἐκλήθη makes it practically certain that the noun κλῆσις refers to the divine call rather than the secular calling. But the latter phrase adequately enough expresses the real meaning, though not the strict and primary sense. Whether the call came to a man in circumcision or uncircumcision, freedom or slavery, in that he was to abide: this amounts practically to saying that his earthly station was not to be abandoned under the influence of the divine call.

21. There were undoubtedly slaves in the Corinthian church, and they would have felt the following apostrophe as a personal appeal. **Were you a slave when you were called? Never mind.** Slaves, who were suddenly confronted with the new importance assigned to them by Christianity, would be peculiarly tempted to deplore their lot, and Paul's steady word would be necessary: do not let it (your slavery) be a care to you, never mind! Unfortunately, the next clause is anything but clear; and two opposite interpretations are possible: **But if thou ART able to become free, use it rather.** Use what? —his opportunity for freedom or continuance in slavery? The answer to this question depends partly on how *kai* is taken: is it (a) "but *though* thou art able to become free, that is, even if you have a chance of liberty, continue rather in slavery"—on the principle that each man is to continue in the state in which he was called; or (b) "but if thou *canst* become free, if thou *hast* a chance of freedom, rather use this chance than continue in slavery." On the whole (b) seems more natural in the context—notice the strong ἀλλά after "never mind"—and does most justice to the aorist χρῆσαι, which could be employed far more naturally of using an opportunity than of continuing in a state. It is true that the time is short, and in view of the speedily expected coming of the Lord, outward states matter little—"never mind"; but the free man, like the unmarried (cf. ver. 32), has a wider scope for service than the slave, and the principle underlying ver. 15, that the Christian married brother is not to be bound by an inflexible view of his condition, has a certain application here.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

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22-24. But whether the chance of freedom has to be welcomed or rejected, the real difference between the free man and the slave is very little: **for the slave, called in the Lord, is in reality the Lord's freed man**—the Lord has bought him from his former master, sin (Rom. vi. 18): **in like manner the free man, by his call, is no longer free, but becomes Christ's slave.** The slave is really free, the free man is really a slave. **Ye were bought with a price**—the very words Paul had already used in arguing against immorality (vi. 20): here he means—you are Christ's, whether as His freed man or His slave, because He has purchased you: therefore, **do not become slaves of men.** The particular point of this warning, if it has any, is not clear; it is apparently a general caution against enslaving one's self to party leaders, institutions (such as circumcision) or to any kind of influence that interferes with the "keeping of the commandments of God" (ver. 19), and with that loyalty which is due to Christ who bought us at so great a price. To sum up: **In each case, in whatever state a man was called, brethren—a kindly touch—in that let him remain—with God.** As is so often the case with Paul, the last phrase sheds a flood of light upon the argument which it concludes. The art of life consists in remaining *with God*, close to the God who called us: to any one who knows the peace (ver. 15) and joy of that communion, the most radical distinctions in the outward life will be relatively insignificant, and he will be content to remain in the state in which he was called.

These words of Paul, like those about marriage, are easy to misinterpret, if we forget the original situation. They are rather a protest against the restless, revolutionary spirit, than a plea for a passive, unaspiring, contentment. The new ideas

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord : yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

which Christianity lodged in the minds of men and which have subsequently changed the face of society, would tend, in many cases, to create a spirit of restlessness ; and this spirit, had it expressed itself, for example, in a rising of slaves, would have indefinitely retarded the progress of the new religion. No lesson was more important for that time than that men could serve God just as they were : the only bondage to be thrown off was that of sin. The Jew, with his national mark upon his body, and the slave in his slavery, could enjoy a walk with God which could not be interrupted or affected by external signs or outward conditions. And is not that a lesson which is valid for every age and every man (*ἐκαστος*, vv. 20, 24),—the essentially spiritual nature of religion ? The spirit of Christianity must indeed try to express itself and get itself embodied ; some institutions it will create ; others, like slavery, which the New Testament does not attack, it will destroy. But these things are only the expression, not the essence of religion : the truly religious man does not depend, for his peace or happiness, upon the things that are without. He lives with God, and with God he is content.

*Advantages of Celibacy (vii. 25-40).*

25. **Now with regard to maidens.** As the cases of the married (vv. 10 ff.) and of unmarried (men) have already been disposed of (vv. 8 f.), Paul now considers the case on which no doubt his advice had been asked (cf. *περὶ δὲ*, with regard to, vii. 1, viii. 1) of girls who were still at home, under the care of father or guardian. Concerning these, **commandment of the Lord I have none** (cf. ver. 12)—on this point Jesus had made no pronouncement any more than in the case of mixed marriages, **but I give my opinion, as one who by the mercy of the Lord is worthy of trust.** This rendering of *πιστὸς* is more appropriate than “faithful.” He was, of course, a faithful steward (iv. 2), but his fidelity would not so fittingly guarantee the “opinion” as his being *worthy of trust*.

25 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say* that *it is* good for man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Never-

26. In the opinion which follows, he passes from the immediate question of the marriage of virgins to the larger question of marriage in general (*ἀνθρώπῳ*). **I consider, then, that this** (that is, what follows at the end of the verse, *τὸ οὖτως εἶναι*) **is good**, if not absolutely, at any rate **by reason of the present straits**. Had another infinitive followed the *ἰπάρχειν*, the construction would have been, not perhaps obscure, but certainly somewhat awkward: this is avoided by a change of construction to *ὅτι* with the (unexpressed) indicative: **I consider that it is good** (cf. ver. 1) **for a person** (*ἀνθρώπῳ*, hardly “**for a man**”) **to be thus**—a somewhat enigmatic phrase, but the following verse shows that it must mean more than “even as I am” (cf. vv. 7, 8). It must embrace both states, and so must be taken to mean: **to be just as he is** (cf. vv. 20, 24). But the whole context shows that Paul is really thinking more of the second alternative (27b)—of the advantage of being “unencumbered” by a wife—than of the first (27a). The *distress* is that which is already upon them—therefore not the hardships of life generally nor any specific persecution, but the distress that was to precede the coming of the Lord (Mat. xxiv. 8 ff., 21, Luke xxi. 23) which was believed to be in the very near future: Paul himself had already drunk deep of this “distress” (cf. iv. 11, 12).

27, 28. It is good to remain as you are. **Are you bound**—possibly by betrothal, but much more probably, in marriage—to a woman? **Do not seek to be freed**. **Are you free**, whether as a widower or a bachelor, from a woman? **Do not seek a woman** (or *wife*): the present imper. implies “do not be on the search for.” **Still**, if you **DO** (*καὶ*, emphatic) marry, you have not, in marrying, sinned (the

theless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

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aorist points to the act of marrying); and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. But marriage, though it is not a sin, will involve suffering: tribulation (emphatic) shall such as marry have in the flesh, that is, "in bodily circumstances and relations." This, more or less true of marriage at any time, would be peculiarly true of the "distress" that would precede the coming of the Lord; and Paul is anxious that his converts should escape such trouble as could be evaded: I, with such authority as I possess over you (*έγώ*), am seeking to spare you by pointing out the advantages of the single state.

29-31. But not only the inevitable sorrows of the time, but its brevity, furnished an additional argument against involving one's life in the obligations of marriage. And this—what follows—I solemnly say, brethren: the very same words occur in a similarly solemn assertion in xv. 50: the time (not life in general, but the period till the coming of Christ) is short (lit. contracted): and this solemn fact, properly considered, ought to encourage in men, whatever be their condition, a sense of spiritual detachment. It ought to have the effect that henceforth they also who have wives should be as though they had none, and those who weep as though they wept not, and those who rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and those who buy as though they had no firm hold of their possessions, and those who use the world as not using it greedily. This means that the Christian was to preserve a sense of per-

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

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spective, to distinguish between the transient and the eternal, and while affected, as he could not but be, by the sorrows and joys that come to him, and by his social and business experiences, not to allow his soul to be engrossed by these things. The tears and the laughter, the life of the family and the transactions of commerce, will continue; but as they belong to a world, the fashion of which is swiftly passing away, the heart will not let itself be entangled by them—it will keep itself as detached and serene as though these things were not. It was in view of the speedy coming of Christ that Paul urged this mood of spiritual detachment upon the Corinthians; but though his expectation of that coming was not realized as he had expected, his words are as valid to-day as when they were written. We recognize indeed that we must give ourselves whole-heartedly to the duties involved in domestic, social, political and professional life, yet for each man, the time is always "short," and in view of the end, which for every man is very near, it is needful to cultivate this serenity of soul which the apostle is here inculcating. "Using the world" as he must, so long as he is in it, he must not "abuse" it—or rather (for *καταχρώμενοι* can bear both meanings)—he must not "use it to the full" or eagerly: **for the fashion of this world is passing away.** Christ is coming; the world is passing, and the true man will sit loose to it (*τὸ λουπὸν* of ver. 29 ought certainly not to be rendered with A.V. "it remaineth": again, to take it with the four preceding words, is considerably to impair their solemnity—"the time is short *henceforth*"; it is best taken with the next clause, thrown forward for emphasis).

32, 33. Another argument in favour of the single state was its relative freedom from care. Any kind of entanglement—and marriage is, in certain aspects, an entanglement—jured a man's power to serve the Lord. Consequently **I want you to be free from anxiety.** The unmarried man

34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.

is anxious about the things of the Lord, and asks himself how he is to please the Lord: but the man who has married is anxious about the things of the transitory world, whose fashion is passing away (ver. 31), asks himself how he is to please his wife, and in this way is divided between the claims of the Lord and the claims of his married life. A passage like this, where the wife almost appears as a rival of the Lord, though not in the terrible sense of vi. 16, 17, goes a long way to suggest that Paul had never been married (cf. ix. 5). He expresses himself paradoxically; he wishes the members of the church to be "free from anxiety" (*ἀμεριμνούς*), yet the "anxious" life of the unmarried is his ideal after all: for their anxiety (*μεριμνᾶ*) is for the things of the Lord, while the anxiety he condemns is that also condemned by Jesus (Mat. vi. 25-34) for the things of the world. It would hardly be in accordance, however, with modern Christian feeling to concede the superiority—in point of spiritual possibility and opportunity—of the maiden to the wife. True, the married woman is more "distracted"; but it is partly through these very distractions, inevitable to family life, that she realizes her service of the Lord, and makes her contribution to the kingdom of God.

34. The text of the opening words of this verse and the manner of construing them are very uncertain, though the words themselves are simple enough. The first question is: does (*καὶ*) *μεμέρισται* (and is divided) go with ver. 33 or 34. We have taken it above with 33, but against this, it might be urged that ver. 33 would be perfectly balanced (cf. ver. 16) if these words did not belong to it. A.V. has taken *μεμέρισται* with ver. 34, and followed the reading: *μεμέρισται ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ἡ παρθένος. ἡ ἀγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ Κυρίου*, translating, "there is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord." One objection

35 And this I speak for your own profit ; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

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to that is that it assigns a rather unsatisfactory meaning to the verb. *μεριζεσθαι* is the word used in Mat. xii. 25 (Mark iii. 24) of a kingdom being divided (against itself), and in this sense, could be very appropriately used of the man who is the subject of ver. 33. On the whole it seems best to take *καὶ μεμέρισται* with ver. 33, and for ver. 34 to adopt the reading : *καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄγαμος καὶ ἡ παρθένος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τῶν Κυρίων*, translating : **Also, the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the things of the Lord.** The singular verb is natural enough, as the two nouns embrace one idea, the “unmarried woman” representing the general category, which is illustrated by the case of “virgins” about whom Paul’s opinion had evidently been asked. The anxiety of the unmarried woman is **that she should be holy (alike) in body and in spirit.** *σώματι* is not intended to cast any reflection on marriage, as that is also holy (ver. 14) ; but the phrase “body and spirit” is apparently intended to signify the consecration of the entire person. **But she who is married cares for the things of the world,** and asks herself how she may please her husband.

35. These frank statements of the spiritual disadvantages of marriage might have been supposed to rest upon some ascetic theory of Paul’s : but this is not so, he says, **It is for your own good that I say this, not that I may throw a noose over you, lasso you, as it were, and capture you to my precepts of celibacy, but with a view to seemliness and undistracted devotion to the Lord.** As often in Paul, the last word sums up the argument. He is desirous that the Corinthians should “sit beside” the Lord (like Mary at the feet of Jesus, Luke x. 39), that is, wait upon Him, *ἀπερισπαστῶς*, without distraction ; they must not be like Martha, who was *distracted* (*περιεσπάτο*) about much serving. Marriage involves distractions, which make complete devotion to the service of the Lord impossible : hence it is “for their own good” that Paul dissuades the Corinthians from it.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his

36. In the next 3 verses (36–38) Paul deals more specifically with the case he set out to discuss—that of virgins (ver. 25), marriageable girls living with their father or guardian. The situation here contemplated could also occur where an unmarried woman had, in consequence of embracing Christianity, been expelled from her home, and thus come under the care of some member of the Christian community. **N**ow if any one—father or guardian—considers that he is acting unseemly (*ἀσχημορεῖν*, cf. xiii. 5, apparently suggested by the seemliness, *εὐσχημον*, of the preceding verse—that decorum, which Paul is trying to further) towards his virgin—whether daughter or ward—if she be beyond adult age (that is, according to Greek ideas, probably over twenty) and if so it ought to be, that is, if there are good reasons for the marriage, let him do what he will; he commits no sin in sanctioning the marriage: let them marry, that is, the girl and her suitor. The “unseemliness” may be that of involving the girl in the disgrace of spinsterhood, or more probably in the temptation to immorality.

37. But while it is *no sin* for the father to consent to the marriage, Paul’s own sympathies clearly lie on the other side, providing the way is open. **B**ut he that standeth in his heart, and that steadfastly (*ἐδραῖος* at end, emphatic), being under no constraint, but having full power regarding his own personal wish, and hath determined in his own heart to keep his own virgin as a virgin—such a man not only commits no sin (ver. 36), but shall do well. In thorough keeping with ancient conceptions, the feelings of the girl are little, if at all, considered: it is the father (or guardian) who determines whether she shall remain a virgin or not, and the double use of *ἴδιος* is very striking—it is with *his* will, in *his* heart, that the final decision lies. The maiden is his own (*τὴν ἑαυτοῦ*

own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well ; but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

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*παρθένον*), and it is his right to dispose of her as, under the circumstances, seems best to him. It is just possible that the phrase “being under no constraint” leaves room for a consideration of the girl’s feelings : but it is more probable that the constraint which might incline him to consent is an external one (cf. ver. 36).

38. So then—the words that follow sum up not only this section dealing with the relations of father to daughter, but the whole discussion of the marriage question—**both he that giveth his own virgin in marriage doeth well, and he that giveth her not shall do better.** Marriage is no sin ; it is *καλόν*, good, honourable ; but the single life is *κρείσσον*, better. This is perhaps the clearest and most deliberate expression of opinion in the chapter.

Though the explanation just given of vv. 36–38 is reasonably satisfactory, especially when we consider the great power vested by the ancient world in the father or guardian, it must be confessed that all the difficulties of the passages are not removed. The phrase “his virgin” is strange, though the word may have been chosen to cover the cases of daughter and ward ; and the precise meaning to be attached to the words “acting unseemly” and “under no constraint” is far from clear. These difficulties have suggested the idea that what Paul is here discussing is “spiritual marriage,” an institution which can be traced back at any rate to the second century A.D. Christian young men who had taken vows of celibacy but were unwilling to dispense with the amenities of home life, and Christian young women, who stood alone and were in need of protection, would agree to live together in bonds of spiritual union. This would give a very intelligible meaning to the words “his virgin” in the passage. In view of the moral peril which would occasionally be involved in such a union, Paul would be here recommending that, in spite of their vows, the young man and his virgin ought to

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will ; only in the Lord.

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my

marry—it is no sin. If, on the other hand, the man is not under the constraint of any sensuous impulse, but has full control of his own will, he ought not to marry, but to keep his virgin as a virgin. What has usually been felt to be the insuperable objection to this interpretation is the grammatical difficulty of the word *γαμίζω*, in ver. 38. As the conclusion of the argument, we should expect : "Consequently he who marries his virgin does well, and he who does not marry her will do better." Instead of this, we get : "he who *gives* his virgin *in marriage*, does well, etc." Lietzmann, however, after an interesting philological argument, concludes that we must concede the possibility of Paul having used *γαμίζω* (which may, by analogy, have come to mean "to celebrate marriage") as the equivalent of *γαμέω* (to marry). On this explanation, many of the leading obscurities of the passage would be removed, and a very interesting sidelight would be thrown upon the life of the young Christian church. We cannot prove that "spiritual" unions appeared so early ; but considering the tendency to asceticism on the part of some of the men, and the dangers to which an unmarried and isolated Christian woman would be exposed in such a society, it must be held to be not impossible.

39. The case of widows, who, if we read *τοῖς χήροις*, in ver. 8, have not yet been expressly mentioned, now comes in for brief consideration. A woman is bound (*νόμῳ*, "by law," A.V. has wrongly crept in, under the influence of Rom. vii. 2) as long as her husband lives ; but if the husband fall asleep in death, she is free to marry whom she will, only with this limitation that she must act in the Lord. This does not *expressly* assert that she must marry a Christian, though in the light of 2 Cor. vi. 14, that is what it practically amounts to : the words mean that her action is to be governed by Christian motives, consistent with her Christian profession.

40. She may marry, but she "will do better" (cf. ver. 38) not

judgment : and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

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to marry : she will be not only happier, in being free from the cares and entanglements of marriage (32-34) but she is more blessed in being free for the undistracted service of the Lord (ver. 35) if she so remain, that is, in her widowhood. Paul is not dogmatic ; he only says, "she is more blessed in my opinion" (cf. ver. 25) ; nevertheless he lets us feel that his opinion is to be very seriously reckoned with, for it is an opinion which he himself believes to be inspired : and (or for) I think that I also, as well as those of you who may think differently on this subject, have the spirit of God. The claim is modestly expressed (for δοκῶ, cf. iv. 9), but there is probably no real hesitation in the mind of Paul. He is a "spiritual" man, and as such can test all things (ii. 15) ; he is conscious of possessing the mind of Christ (ii. 16).

If Paul's discussion of marriage in this chapter somewhat disappoints modern expectations, it must not be forgotten that it is governed by temporal and local considerations. The people addressed were Corinthians : and the time was believed to be shortly before the coming of the Lord. The phrase διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην determines the whole temper of the discussion (ver. 26) ; the arguments urged are natural and reasonable *on account of the present distress*. Marriage is a good thing (ver. 38), even a commendable thing under the circumstances that prevailed at Corinth (vv. 2, 9) ; but it is not the best thing. The single state is better (vv. 38, 8) ; and one at least of the arguments which the apostle urges in its favour, has a certain measure of abiding validity. With the coming of Christ in view, he argued that the time was short, the distress was sore, and the distractions of married life were real and serious. The last argument has still its application. There are certain kinds of service which can only, or at any rate most completely, be performed by those who are not bound by the ties of wife and family. Paul could hardly, as a married man, have done the wonderful work for the world which he did. While these ties may enlarge a man's sympathy, and sometimes, as in certain phases

of foreign mission service, even his opportunity, they also, in many cases, circumscribe his sphere and diminish his possibilities of service. *He is divided* (*μεμέρισται*, ver. 33) in a sense in which an unmarried Christian man is not, and a service of the Lord which is assiduous and *undistracted* (*ἀπερισπάστως*, ver. 35) will be very much less possible to him. But while this consideration justifies celibacy for those who have the gift of continence (*ἐγκρατεύονται*, ver. 9) and the passion for service, it must not be exalted—and Paul does not exalt it—into an ideal for all. In the nature of the case (cf. ver. 9b), those who “make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Mat. xix. 12) will always be few.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO IDOL SACRIFICES AND FEASTS (viii. 1-xi. 1)

### CHAPTER VIII

I Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

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We have already seen something of the difficulty which the converts must have experienced in maintaining Christian principles and practices in a pagan environment like that of Corinth. The business and inevitable intercourse of social life brought them into contact with men whose standards were immeasurably inferior to the Christian standard: to escape this contact, they would have had to "go out of the world" altogether (v. 10). One of the practical difficulties of the Christians, discussed in this section, was created by the pervasive influence of idolatry. It affected, as we shall see, the nature of the club-life which must have abounded in such a city as Corinth; it affected even the meat which came upon the Corinthian tables. When a sacrifice was offered in a temple, the meat was sometimes eaten in one of the rooms of the temple (viii. 10), at other times it would find its way into the public market (x. 25), and thence to the table of a private house (x. 27). What was to be the Christian's attitude to such meat? Was he to abstain from it, on the ground that by partaking of it, he associated himself with idolatry? or was he to eat without compunction, on the ground that the idol, to whom the sacrifice had been offered, was a nonentity? That is the question discussed in this section (viii.-x.), especially in viii. and x. 23-xi.

*Shall the Motive of Action be Knowledge or Love? (viii.).*

**i.** Now with regard to things sacrificed to idols—another of the points on which Paul's advice had clearly been

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

asked : with the *περὶ δὲ* of ver. 1, cf. viii. 1, 25. **We know that we all have knowledge.** The words may also mean, "we know, because we all have knowledge"; but it is almost impossible to disconnect the *οἴδαμεν ὅτι* of ver. 1 from the similar words of ver. 4, where they must mean "we know that." The meaning may be that Paul, and those, in general, whom he addresses, have a clear insight into the fact that an idol is a nonentity, and that consequently the eating of meat sacrificed to an idol is morally indifferent. But it seems more probable that in this verse, as apparently elsewhere in this chapter, we have echoes of the Corinthian letter. Paul has so often said, with a touch of irony, "*ye know : do ye not know ?*" —6 times, for example, in ch. vi.—that we are justified in suspecting *οἴδαμεν ὅτι*, etc., to be a claim of the Corinthians. **We know—you say—that we all have knowledge.** This is a "wise" church (i. 5), and is often twitted by Paul for its conceit of wisdom (iv. 10). The sequel shows that, as a matter of fact, they did *not* all possess this knowledge (ver. 7).

But in any case, argues Paul, knowledge is not enough : that alone will not take the church very far on the way to edification. **Knowledge puffs up, it is love—love of God (ver. 3) and of the brethren (ver. 11)—that builds up (iii. 9).** Inflation and edification—that is the contrast. Mere knowledge makes no *substantial* contribution to the church : that can only be done by love. A delicate question, like that under discussion, can not be decided purely on its own merits : it is a question that affects the "brethren" (ver. 11), and only those who love them, can reach a *Christian* decision. "Knowledge," as Bengel remarks, "only says, 'All things are lawful for me'; love adds, 'but all things do not edify'" (x. 23).

**2, 3. If any of you Corinthians who suppose that knowledge unilluminated by love, will lead you to an edifying decision on such a question—if any man imagines that he has complete (pf.) knowledge of anything, he has not yet won the proper kind of knowledge:** for the proper kind, the

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.

5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)

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kind he ought (*δεῖ*) to have, is that for edification, and that must be inspired by love (cf. ch. xiii.). **But if any man LOVES God, this is the man**—and not the other—who . . . we should expect the sentence to continue, “knows Him,” or “knows as he ought to know”;—instead we have, **is known by Him.** The implication no doubt is that the knowledge of the man who loves, approximates at least to the true knowledge: but the apostle prefers, by the unexpected turn he gives the sentence, rather to call attention to the divine regard for the man, as the source of any true insight the man possesses. For a very similar turn of expression, cf. Gal. iv. 9 “now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God.”

4, 5. The discussion of the sacrificial meats, interrupted at the start by the elaboration of the contrast between knowledge and wisdom, is now resumed. **With regard then to the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know**—in what follows, vv. 4b–6, as in ver. 1, it is possible, though not certain, that we have an echo of, if not an extract from the Corinthian letter: and the confession of faith in these verses may represent perhaps the very words taught them by the apostle. We know **that there is no idol in the world**, no divine reality in the universe to which the idol or image corresponds. “Existence is denied to the idol not absolutely (see 5, x. 19 f.), but relatively.” (Findlay.) The alternative translation *that an idol is nothing in the world*, besides failing to do justice to the phrase “in the world,” is practically negated by the second clause, which is apparently intended to balance it; **and that there is no God—other, ἔτερος, of A.V. has apparently crept in from the first commandment—but one.** Verse 5 appears to rob ver. 4 of part of its effect by conceding the possibility, if not indeed

6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this

the actual existence, in some sense (*λεγόμενοι*), of many gods: but at any rate not to the Corinthian Christians—*to us* there is but *one* (ver. 6). For even supposing there do exist (*εἰσὶν* in this clause and the next is, by its position, emphatic) gods so-called whether in heaven or on earth, just as there exist many gods and many lords—Athens (Acts xvii. 16–23), and no doubt, Corinth, were full of their images. If these words belong to Paul rather than to the Corinthians, they may be explained by x. 20 where “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *demons*, and not to God.” Greek and Jew alike believed in a multitude of demi-gods, angels and demons.

6. Yet, whatever may be the truth about the existence of many gods, **to us** Christians **there is but one God**, whom Jesus taught the world to call the **Father**, from whom as source and creator **all things** (lit. *the system of all things*) **proceed**, and **we**—not all men, but we Christians—unto Him as our goal and end: **and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom** as Mediator in creation, **are all things**, and we **through Him**, as Mediator in redemption. The one God and Lord of this verse are the counterpart of the many gods and lords of ver. 2. The high place here assigned to Christ in creation as well as in redemption prepares the way for the Christology of Col. i. 15 f.: He holds a similar place in John i. 3, Heb. i. 2. We are *εἰς αὐτόν*, unto God; He is the true goal, as He is the source, of our life; and we can reach this goal only *δι' αὐτοῦ*, through Christ. It is a consideration of these two great facts—the fact of God and His absoluteness, the fact of Christ and His lordship—that makes idolatry ridiculous, and the eating of food sacrificed to idols a matter of indifference. Such was the Corinthian conclusion, and such, but for the weaker brother, would have been Paul's conclusion.

7. But all had not this insight: not in all is this (*ἢ*) knowledge. There are some who, through being accustomed,

hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol ; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God : for neither, if we eat, are we the better ; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

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**up till now, to the idol**, and consequently unable to shake off the impression that it has a certain real existence, **eat the meat as a thing sacrificed to idols, with the result that their conscience, being weak, is stained**, because they feel that their partaking of such meat has definitely associated them with the idol. Their conscience may be weak, and unenlightened : still, it is *their* conscience, and as such, they are bound to respect it—it must remain pure, *unstained*. Instead of *συνηθεῖα*, *συνειδήσει* (A.V. “with conscience of the idol”) is read by some good MSS. and preferred by some scholars as the more difficult reading ; but, on the other hand, it may have crept in under the influence of the *συνειδήσεις* later in the sentence.

8. This verse may be regarded as an exclamation of the enlightened Corinthians. What has meat to do with conscience ? At the judgment (hence the future *παραστήσει*) **meat will not affect our standing with God**. *παρίστημι* is a neutral word : hence *commendeth* (A.V.) which would require *συνίστημι*, is too strong. The meaning is : meat will not bring us before God—it is not on such an issue that our judgment will take place. **We are neither the worse for abstaining nor the better for eating.** Some MSS. read or altered the text to *we are neither the better for abstaining nor the worse for eating*. The verbs imply that their position with God was neither *advantageous* (*περισσεύομεν*) nor *inferior* (*ὑστερούμεθα*).

9. It may be, rejoins Paul, that theoretically considered food will not affect our standing with God. But this is a practical question, not a theoretical one ; and in the situation, an act, innocent in itself, may have disastrous moral and religious consequences. **Nevertheless be careful lest haply this liberty of yours**, enlightened as you are, **may prove a**

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols ;

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ?

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**stumbling-block to the weak.** You have to consider your neighbour's conscience, as well as your own ; and strength must be merciful to weakness. How far this liberty was carried and in what way it might prove a stumbling-block, is illustrated by ver. 10.

10. For if one of these unenlightened Christians sees you, the person who is in possession of knowledge—Paul appears here to single out some individual or individuals and to address them directly—reclining at table in an idol's temple, shall not his conscience, weak as he is, be edified, unto the eating of the things sacrificed to idols—“edified” to his destruction as the next verse shows, *for he is perishing*. The *emboldened* (of A.V. and R.V.) for *οἰκοδομηθήσεται* misses a delicate point. Apparently the “liberals” in the Corinthian church expected that such conduct would “edify” the weaker brethren : they were indeed edified, replies Paul, and ruined in the process, because conscience had been dethroned. There can be no real edification without love (ver. 1). The presence of a Christian reclining in a pagan temple is a real surprise, after making every allowance for the advanced views of the enlightened Corinthians. It is probably to be explained, as Professor W. M. Ramsay has suggested, that these Corinthians had still retained their membership in pagan clubs and societies (*Expositor*, 1900, vol. ii. 434). Though the object of these clubs would be non-religious—otherwise we cannot conceive a Christian thus definitely associating himself with them—they had a certain religious character : the meetings would often be held in a temple, and the unity of the members sealed by a common meal, of which the flesh had first been offered in sacrifice to the god of the temple.

11. Edified ! and ruined ! Your knowledge has destroyed him. **For the weak man perishes through your know-**

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend,

**ledge**, perhaps by means of (*ἐν*) it, or more literally, *in the atmosphere of your knowledge*—*i.e.*, it is a ruinous influence for him. The man of broad principles must consider, in love, the conscience of his narrower brother, and while he may try to educate it, he will not tempt him to violate it. The weak conscience “may be a less enlightened, but is certainly a more authoritative guide,” than the advice or example of another man can be. What aggravates the sin of this inconsiderate example is that the man who is tempted by it, is not only weak, but *a Christian brother*, one therefore to whom special consideration, and even affection, is due: and not only is he a brother, but **the brother on whose account Christ died**. The man is *ruined*, who might have been saved, whom Christ died to save. For his salvation, Christ sacrificed *Himself*: the champion of enlightenment will sacrifice nothing. He is engaged in the futile experiment of seeking to edify his brother by knowledge without love. But knowledge alone spells not only conceit (ver. 1) but destruction (ver. 11). This verse is read as a question by A.V. “and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish?” (*καὶ ἀπολεῖται* [or *ἀπόλλυται*] instead of *ἀπόλλυται γάρ*).

12. And by sinning in this way against the brethren, that is (*καὶ* explains what is meant by sinning) by cruelly smiting their conscience, in its weak state, you are sinning against Christ, for inasmuch as ye did it—whether a kindness or a cruelty—unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me (Mat. xxv. 40, 45); and elsewhere, in more terrible words, “it were well,” says Jesus, “that the man who causes a little one to stumble should be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Mat. xviii. 6). To *smile* (not *wound*, as A.V., R.V.) the weak is cruel and cowardly: such blows may *destroy* (*ἀπόλλυται γάρ*).

13. Paul closes his argument by a splendid personal pledge. He has knowledge, but he has also love: wherefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will assuredly (*οὐ μή*) eat no flesh for evermore, lest I may cause my brother

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I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

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**to stumble.** Twice in this short verse, and twice in the last two verses, the *brother* is mentioned : it is this personal element that turns an academic question into a vital and practical one. The Corinthians thought of the question : Paul thought of the brother. He is free (ix. 1), but he limits his freedom for the brother's sake. *κρέα*, plur., of the different kinds of "food," with special reference to the sacrificial flesh in question.

The question of the legitimacy of eating the flesh of animals that had been offered in sacrifice no longer exists for us ; but we have other questions—theatre, card-playing, the use of wine, etc.—which present similar problems to the Christian conscience, and upon which good men are divided. Paul's counsel, and even his words, though addressed to a very different situation, still apply. In effect he says that knowledge, insight, alone does not settle these questions : they can only be settled by insight, tempered with love. Mere knowledge *puffs up* ; it is *love* that *builds up*. Such questions are never abstract : they are questions that affect *brethren* : and the man who would decide them wisely and helpfully must not only understand the problem, he must love the brethren. He will not forget that his brother has a conscience as well as himself, and he must respect his brother's, as he respects his own. He will, in love, seek to train the weak conscience, but he will not smite it. He will edify it, but not to its ruin ; he must see that, with the broader outlook, it loses none of its authority. The man who, by his example, would enlighten another, must make sure that that example will not beget indifference to moral obligation, or lower the quality of the inner life. That is but a poor enlightenment which ends by destroying the brother for whom Christ died.

THE APOSTLE ILLUSTRATES HIS ARGUMENT FOR SELF-DENIAL BY HIS OWN PRACTICE (ix.)

CHAPTER IX

I AM I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

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*Paul the Apostle (ix. 1-3).*

Paul shows in this chapter that the principle of self-denial for the brother's sake which he has just laid down (viii.), he has himself practised by refusing to claim from the Corinthian church the maintenance to which, as a preacher, he was entitled. And this leads him to turn aside for a moment from his main argument to the defence of his apostolic rights.

i. If Paul refrains from the meat that had been offered to idols, it is for his brother's sake, and not because he is not at liberty to partake of it: for **am I not free?** And to say nothing of my freedom as a Christian man, whom Christ has redeemed from bondage (vii. 21-23) to all externally imposed law, **am I not an apostle**, and, as such, in possession of special rights. (A.V. wrongly reverses the order of these questions.) Nor can you doubt my claim to apostleship, for I possess the qualification that is acknowledged to be essential —**have I not seen Jesus our Lord?** Paul claims to have had mystic "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. xii. 1), and at important crises to have been addressed by Him in a vision or trance (Acts xviii. 9, xxii. 17): he refers here, however, not to these experiences, but to that vision of the Lord on his way to Damascus which started him on his Christian career (Acts ix. 17, xxii. 8-10). The apostles must be witnesses to the resurrection, and this was the experience that pre-eminently constituted Paul a witness. In the nature of the

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you : for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this :

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink ?

case, however, this proof of his apostleship, being subjective, was not beyond the possibility of challenge : consequently Paul directs the Corinthians to a proof which is beyond challenge—his own success in establishing the church at Corinth : **are not ye yourselves** (*ὑμεῖς*) **my work in the Lord?** The work was done *in the Lord* (cf. iv. 15).

**2, 3.** Paul's apostleship had evidently been challenged, possibly by the party of Peter or of Christ (i. 12), and he shows the fatuity of the challenge. His detractors had not opened their eyes to the facts. **If to others**—in the eyes of others—I am no apostle, yet at any rate to you I am one, for you are yourselves (*ὑμεῖς*) the seal and guarantee of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defence to those who examine me : the word *ἀναπίρωσιν* suggests a semi-official examination (used in Luke xxiii. 14 of Pilate's examination of Christ) and shows how seriously Paul's claims were being contested. The *this* points rather back than forward: the Corinthian church (ver. 2) is itself the proof of Paul's apostleship. What follows is not a defence, but a series of claims.

In the following verses (4–15a) Paul asserts his rights, as an apostle, elaborately and emphatically, which makes all the more impressive his deliberate refusal, for the gospel's sake, to avail himself of those rights (15b–19).

*The Minister's Rights (ix. 4–15a).*

**4. We have a right, have we not, to eat and drink at the cost of the church** (cf. Mark vi. 10). This chapter is connected, by its emphasis on *ἐξοντία*, with the last (cf. viii. 9), but the addition of *drink* shows that the question of sacrificial meat is no longer under discussion. The context (cf. ver. 7) makes it certain that he is referring to the maintenance of the ministry by the church. By *we* he probably means, not specially

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

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himself and Barnabas (ver. 6), but himself and, in general, the others who assist him. He is doubtless, however, thinking more particularly of himself; from ver. 15 to end of chapter, the 1st pers. sing. is used. The claim of the right to eat and drink is a modest one, like the petition, "Give us our bread for the day."

5. We have a right, have we not, not only to marry, but to take about with us on our missionary tours, at the expense of the church, a Christian wife (lit. *a sister*, that is, a Christian sister, *as a wife*), as well as the rest of the apostles, most of whom, according to this notice, must have been married, and accompanied on their tours by their wives; and the brothers of the Lord (Mark vi. 3) who are certainly to be distinguished from the twelve (cf. Acts i. 14), in spite of the fact that Peter, who is last mentioned belonged to that body. Of these brothers the most conspicuous was James (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9), leader of the Jerusalem church: and Peter (Cephas) separately mentioned because his name was specially familiar and his example no doubt frequently quoted in Corinth (i. 12).

6. Or is it only Barnabas and myself that have not the right of exemption from manual toil? *ἐργάζεσθαι* suggests manual labour: it is used of vineyard work (Mat. xxi. 28) and of tent making, which was Paul's work (Acts xviii. 3). Paul and Barnabas, now separated, are often mentioned in association (Acts xi. 30, xiii. 2, 3, Gal. ii. 9).

7. The claims, then, which might have been legitimately urged by Paul were three: for his own maintenance, for the maintenance and travelling expenses of his wife, and for

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

exemption from manual labour. He proceeds to justify these claims by several considerations, firstly, by analogy. **Who ever serves as a soldier at his own expense?** *ἀψώνια*, primarily a soldier's *rations*, then his *pay*. The Christian minister is a soldier: why should he not, like any other soldier, be supported by those in whose behalf he enters the service? **Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit thereof?** Nobody. Has then the apostle, who plants a church, not the right to fare as well? **Or who shepherds a flock, and does not eat of the milk of the flock?** The apostle has also a flock to feed: has he not, like the shepherd, the right to live by it? The *εκ* may suggest a share, or perhaps the source of his recompense, which may have taken other forms (cf. *έσθιει*) besides milk: but in effect the meaning differs little from the direct accusative *καρπόν*. The point of the verse is that workmen have a right to be rewarded for, or to share in the proceeds of, their toil: Christian ministers form no exception.

8, 9a. But for this view of their services, there is higher warrant than human analogy: there is scripture. **Do I say these things merely as a man—with merely *human* authority? or does the law not say this as well?** An argument could always be clinched by a quotation from the Old Testament. The *law*, which can be applied to the whole of the Old Testament (to psalms, e.g. in John x. 34, xv. 25, to prophecy in 1 Cor. xiv. 21), is here specifically the law of *Moses*, that is Pentateuch. **For in the law of Moses it stands written,** “Thou shalt not muzzle an ox that is threshing” (Deut. xxv. 4). The threshing was performed chiefly in two ways, either by the feet of the cattle treading out the corn, or by a sledge driven over the threshing floor. “The most common mode of threshing is with the ordinary slab called *mowrej*, which is drawn over the floor by a horse or yoke of

10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

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oxen, until not only the grain is shelled out, but the straw itself is ground into chaff. . . . The command of Moses not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn is literally obeyed to this day by most farmers, and you often see the oxen that draw the mowrej eating from the floor as they revolve. There are niggardly peasants, however, who *do muzzle the ox*" (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 540).

9b, 10. Now what is the meaning of such a law? **Is it for the oxen that God careth? or does He** (God: or perhaps *it*, the law, scripture) not clearly (*πάντως*, by all means) **say it on OUR account?** that is, not on man's account, but on account of Christian ministers, such as Paul. To the question, "Is it for the oxen that God cares," Paul clearly expects the answer *No*. It is just as plain that the only answer that accords with the spirit of the Old Testament, is an affirmative. God does most assuredly care for the oxen, and not only on our account, but on their own. Old Testament legislation was nobly merciful to the beasts. A righteous man careth for the life of his beast (Prov. xii. 10). God caused the grass to grow for the cattle (Ps. civ. 14), He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry (Ps. cxlvii. 9), and he spares Nineveh, with its "much cattle" (Jonah iv. 11). Jesus shared this view of the dumb creation—the birds and the sheep. Paul's question here is touched by the Rabbinism in which he had been trained; but though his *interpretation* of the passage is hardly just to the spirit of the Old Testament, his *application* of it is singularly happy. As the ox must not be muzzled, but must be free to feed as he does his hard work upon the threshing-floor, so must the Christian minister be free to "eat and drink" at the cost of the church for which he works. **Yes, it was for our sake it was written, to wit, that the plower ought to plough in hope and the thresher to thresh, in hope of sharing.** This is by some regarded as a citation from some lost apocryphal book, but the clause is rather *explanatory* of the preceding

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are not we rather?* Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

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quotation ("to wit that"), than causal ("because," as R.V. takes it). In that case the plower and the thresher are primarily to be understood of the ox, and secondarily of the Christian teacher. The true reading appears to be *καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν* (with *ἀλοᾶν*, governed by *ὁφείλει*, understood) *ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τοῦ μετέχειν*. A.V. rests on a confused reading *καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν τῆς ἐλπίδος μετέχειν* *ἐπ' ἐλπίδι* (and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope)—a reading apparently due to the mistake of supposing that *μετέχειν* was directly governed by *ὁφείλει* (ought to share), a mistake which involved further alteration and expansion. The principle of the verse is that the worker should be relieved from all anxiety, *μέριμνα*: he must be able to cherish the "hope of sharing."

11, 12. After appealing to scripture, Paul now appeals to the common sense of the Corinthians; and by an effective juxtaposition of *we* and *you* (*ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν*: *ἡμεῖς, ὑμῶν*), he produces a contrast which it is impossible to reproduce in English. **If WE sowed spiritual things for YOU, is it a great thing if WE shall reap YOUR carnal things?** Besides the contrast between *we* and *you*, there are the further contrasts between the *sowing* and the *reaping*, and between the *spiritual* and the *carnal*. The sower has a right to look for a harvest: surely no one would grudge him a harvest of so inferior a kind as that which he claims. It is no great thing if one who brought them the unspeakable gift of the gospel should have the paltry recompense of meat and drink, especially as others, with less claim, had enjoyed it; for **if others share in the right over you, of which I speak, do not we yet more?** for Paul was, in a unique sense, *father* of the Corinthian church (iv. 15). He has argued with skill and force for the right to these privileges and exemptions; but, he goes on, **we made no use of this right:** instead, we put up with all sorts of things, such things as

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done

he enumerates in iv. 11 ff.—hunger, thirst, persecution, the contempt of the world. And his reason for refusing to avail himself of what he could have rightly claimed is that we may offer no kind of (*τινόν*) hindrance to the gospel of Christ. His self-denial in ch. viii. was for the brethren's sake, here it is for the gospel's sake. Had he insisted upon his rights as a Christian minister, the “good news” might have been misunderstood: the gospel must be allowed to shine in its own light, and no conduct of his, however innocent, must be allowed to obscure it (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 7–11).

13. The argument for the right of the Christian minister to maintenance he now strengthens still further by an appeal to the practice of the priests. Do you not know (cf. ver. 24)—you wise men ought to know—that those who are engaged in the sacred offices eat the things that come from the sacred place (that is, the temple), and that those who attend upon (*παρεδρεύοντες*, cf. vii. 35, *τὸ εὐπάρεδρον τῷ κυρίῳ*) the altar have their portion with the altar? That is, the fire claims part, and the rest goes to the priests. Some suppose that the reference of the first clause is to heathen practice, others to the Levites: more probably, however, both clauses refer to the Jewish priests.

14, 15a. The principle of this law of the old covenant—that he who is engaged in sacred offices should be maintained—is confirmed by Jesus. So also did the Lord—not God, but Jesus—ordain for those who proclaim the gospel, that they should live from the preaching of the gospel. The workman, said Jesus, deserves his food (Mat. x. 10) or his wages (Luke x. 7). Jesus, who came to “fulfil” the law (Mat. v. 17) fulfilled it here also. But as for me (*ἐγώ*), says Paul, I

unto me : for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

**have made no use of these things**, of these rights which he has so elaborately defended by appeals to analogy, scripture, common sense, Jewish practice, and the ordinance of the Lord. This has been his settled practice (*κέχρηματι*, pf.) to make no use of them—a more comprehensive statement than *ἐχρησάμεθα* (aor.), ver. 12. It is interesting to note how a word of Jesus settles the matter. With this appeal the discussion is closed.

*Paul's Renouncement and Reward* (ix. 15b–18).

**15b.** Paul has argued so warmly and convincingly for his rights as a Christian minister that the statement of his refusal to avail himself of those rights comes as a sudden surprise. He has argued the case for others—the minister is entitled to the support of the church which he serves. But the Corinthians need not be afraid that he is arguing for himself ; the rights which he has defended he relinquishes in his own case. Now my object in writing this (*ἔγραψα*, I write, epistolary aorist) is not that such steps (that is, for my support) be taken in my case. No ! I had rather die than— : he cannot bear even to utter the thought that is in his mind—"than live at the expense of a church which contests my right to maintenance"—so he goes on : (this) boast of mine no man shall make void—the boast, namely, that he proclaimed the gospel for nothing. The abrupt turn thus given to the sentence is very effective, though it must be admitted that this particular kind of ellipse is very unusual, if not unparalleled. It may partly be explained by the fact that Paul is dictating. The great variations in the MSS. show that the early transcribers were perplexed. Instead of *οὐδείς*, presupposed by the above translation, *ἴνα τις* is read in some, the following verb being read either as *κενώσῃ* (subj.) or *κενώσει* (fut. ind.). If *ἴνα τις κενώσει* (ind.) had been the original reading, the irregularity of the construction, though not without parallel, might easily have led to the subsequent changes : *οὐδείς* for *ἴνα τις*, on the one hand, or *κενώσῃ* (subj.) for *κενώσει* on the other hand. The translation would then be : I had rather die than that any one should make void my boast—the same meaning much less passionately expressed.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of ; for necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward : but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then ? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

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**16, 17.** This boast (lit. "matter of glorying") which must on no account be made void, is that Paul preaches the gospel *without cost to the church*, not simply that he preaches—he cannot help that. **For in merely proclaiming the gospel, I have no cause to boast**, for it is a case of *must*—necessity is laid upon me: yes, misery is mine (lit. *woe* [an interjection] *is to me*) if I do not preach. No reward, he means, is due to a man who works, as he worked for the gospel, under constraint. **For if it is of my own free will that I am doing this** (that is, preaching)—as it is not, for *necessity* is laid upon me—then I have my reward. If, on the other hand, it is not of my own free will—and this is the real state of affairs—I have had a stewardship entrusted to me, and as such, am not entitled to reward. Fidelity is expected in a steward (iv. 2, where the words are similar), but he is not entitled to a reward for doing what it was his duty to do (Luke xvii. 10).

18. Paul then, neither expects nor desires a reward for preaching: indeed, he nobly argues that, under the terms of his commission—*constrained* (*ἀνάγκη*) as he was—it was impossible. Yet he has his reward. **What then is my reward?** It is one which could only appeal to a noble, unselfish, and wholly consecrated mind—the reward of dispensing with reward, of preaching the gospel for nothing ; it is that in preaching, I may make the gospel message free of charge (cf. Acts xx. 33), so that I might not use to the full (*καταχρήσασθαι*, cf. vii. 31) the right that is mine in proclaiming the gospel. Alford explains, "What is the

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the

prospect of reward that could induce me to preach the gospel gratuitously?" regarding the whole verse (not simply the first clause) as the question: and the answer he finds in the "gaining" (*κερδήσω*), that is, the "salvation" (*σώσω*, ver. 22) of the greater number (ver. 19). It is certainly significant, in a context which discusses reward, that the word *gain* should be repeated no less than five times. This sort of gain is also thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of Paul: cf. 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20, where he speaks of the Thessalonians as "our hope, joy, glory, crown of glorying" (*καυχήσεως*) at the coming of our Lord Jesus. The chief objection to this view is that with ver. 19 the thought seems to take a slightly different turn: vv. 18, 19 are not so intimately connected as the above interpretation presupposes.

#### *The Versatile Self-Abnegation of Zeal (ix. 19-23).*

19. Paul had rights, *ἐξονστά* (ver. 18) as a preacher of the gospel, but he did not make use of them (vv. 12, 15, 18): he was free (vv. 1, 19), but he made no use of his liberty, except to make himself the slave of everybody; and this he did that he might win them. **For being free from all, I made myself the slave of all** (the juxtaposition *πάντων πᾶσιν* it is impossible to reproduce in English)—a strange use of liberty, but it was **that I might win the greater number** for Christ and salvation (*σώσω*, ver. 22)—greater than would have been won without this accommodation of himself to everybody. He does not say *all*, his only hope is to win *some* (ver. 22). The "gain" which Paul expects from his ministry is not money, nor even maintenance, but souls.

20. He proceeds to illustrate the various types of bondage to which he, the free man, submitted, for the gospel's sake. **For example (*kai*), I became to the Jews as a Jew—as a Jew**, for he was no longer a Jew in the ordinary sense—

law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

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**that I might win Jews.** Though he was well aware, for example, that “circumcision is nothing” (vii. 19), he had Timothy circumcised “because of the Jews that were in those parts” (Acts xvi. 3, cf. Gal. v. 11); and he took upon him specifically Jewish vows (Acts xviii. 18, cf. xxi. 23 ff.). **To those under** the Mosaic law—not so much “the Jews,” who are already mentioned (unless it be a case of rhetorical repetition, or the better to point the contrast with the next clause), but circumcised proselytes—I became **as under** the law, though I am not myself under the law—as a *Christian*, Paul is no longer under the *Jewish* law (Gal. ii. 19)—**that I might win those under the law.** The clause ( $\mu\bar{\eta}\ \bar{w}\nu\ a\bar{v}t\bar{o}s\ \bar{v}\pi\bar{o}\ r\bar{o}\mu\bar{o}v$ ) was accidentally omitted from the common text, and so from A.V., owing to the similarity of ending to that of the previous clause.

21. **To those that are without** the Mosaic law—the heathen, as opposed to the Jews, who have it—I became **as one without law, not of course that I am really without the law of God, but within the law of Christ** (cf. Gal. vi. 2), **that I might gain them that are without law.** In dealing with the heathen, he accommodated himself to their standpoint, as when he pointed the people of Lystra to the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons as a witness to God (Acts xiv. 17), and still more strikingly at Athens, where he took his text from an inscription on a Greek altar, and quoted in his sermon from a Greek poet (Acts xvii.). Paul is specially careful here to safeguard himself. He adopted for the moment, and to “gain” them, the standpoint of the *āνομοι*, but he was not really *āνομος*: he acknowledged the great law of God which had found its perfect expression in Christ, so that he is *in law in respect of Christ*. Here again (cf. i. 3, iii. 23) the connection of Christ and God is striking.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

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22. To the weak I became weak—not *as* weak (A.V.), but really weak (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 29) as though he not merely understood but shared their weakness—that I might gain the weak. The weak are the scrupulous (viii. 7); and though *through knowledge*, Paul rises above their scruple, *in love* he shares it (viii. 1). These are but four illustrations of the policy that governed his whole ministry, to meet *each* man sympathetically on his own ground: I have become all things to all men (*τοῖς πᾶσιν*, all the men with whom he had to do). This elasticity, which might be interpreted as moral indifference or even as time-serving, is really an anxious spiritual sympathy: its motive is that by all means I may save some. His efforts are abundant, but his hopes are modest—for the salvation of some: he knows the stern realities with which he has to contend. The word *save* defines the word *gain*: he gains them by saving them.

23. Not only this particular policy of accommodation, but all Paul's acts, were dictated by his love for the gospel. And not only this, but all things I do for the gospel's sake, that I may become a joint (*σύν*) partaker in it and its blessings—especially its blessing of salvation (*σωσω*, ver. 22). In his effort to save others, he must not forget or neglect his own salvation. These words are characterized, as Bengel remarks, by great modesty: his aim is to *become* a sharer with others.

This whole passage (ix. 1–23) is written with considerable warmth, and illustrates both the practical wisdom and the spiritual greatness of the apostle. In eager, rapid logic he argues for the maintenance of the ministry by the church, and his arguments are in large measure still valid. One who gives his whole time to the spiritual nurture of others ought himself to be relieved of sordid anxieties. Work that deeply

touches the mind or heart can never be adequately recompensed in money, and it is surely *no great thing* (ver. 11) if such workers have their needs generously supplied by those for whose highest welfare they do so much. Jesus Himself said that the workman deserves his food (or wages); and the church has the duty of making a reasonable and not ungenerous provision for those who serve her.

But Paul himself makes no use of those rights (vv. 12, 15) for which he has argued with such conviction. After fighting the battle for others, he refuses to share in the spoils of victory. And he refuses for the gospel's sake; he is fearful of offering to it any manner of hindrance through any act of his (ver. 12). To accept even the most meagre remuneration for preaching might, under the circumstances, have exposed the "good news" to misrepresentation; and Paul will take no risk. He preaches because he cannot help it, and he deserves no reward for that: the only reward he desires is the salvation of those for whose sake he denies himself.

Incidentally we get a glimpse of the secret of Paul's overwhelming power as a preacher: he preached under an irresistible impulse, and with the consciousness that a divine constraint was upon him. "Woe is me if I preach not"—that is the stuff of which the great preachers are made, the Luthers, the Wesleys, the Whitefields (ver. 16). And a preacher of this kind, when his authority is challenged, can usually, though not perhaps invariably, point to results. "Are ye not my work in the Lord?" (ver. 1).

But nothing better illustrates Paul's greatness as a spiritual leader than his power of adapting himself to all sorts and conditions of men; and it is here that many who aspire to be leaders fail. Though a Christian, Paul retained completely his power to look at the world with the eyes of the Jew; though himself a man of broad and of the broadest mind, he could understand, and for practical purposes share, the scruples of the narrow-minded. Such he called not bigot, but brother. A single illustration may be taken from the situation in the church to-day. Defenders of the modern view of the Bible sometimes speak of the supporters of "orthodoxy" in language that is harsh, discourteous, and provocative of ill-feeling; but that is surely not the way to "win some." If a man is to be won, he must first be understood; his stand-

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

point must be not only intelligently, but sympathetically considered. The weak will only be saved by one who is tender to weakness. In short, the man who would "save some" for Christ must learn to be their friend and servant (ver. 19), he must be a master in that divine art of versatility which enables him to "become all things to all men."

*Paul's Race for Life (ix. 24-27).*

The thought hinted at the close of ver. 23, that Paul has to consider his own salvation as well as that of others, is worked out in this section with great and graphic earnestness.

**24. Do you not know**—as Corinthian Greeks, of course, they could not help knowing—that of those who run in the race-course—the stadium was about half a quarter of a mile in length—while all run, only one gets the prize. *μέν . . . δέ* well contrasts the many competitors with the single winner. The Corinthians would be especially familiar with the Isthmian games. It is hard to win this race—all are in earnest, all are temperate (ver. 25), but only one is victor—and it is equally hard, or infinitely harder to win the Christian race; it is not enough to enter for it. Therefore run in that fashion—like those earnest, temperate (ver. 25) runners, or rather, like the successful competitor—in order that ye may attain the prize. (Not "run in such a way as to attain," which would rather be *ωστε καταλαβεῖν.*)

**25. Now** at the Greek games every combatant, and not the winner alone, exercises in all things positive self-control, which is more than mere negative abstinence: he must be *his own master*. For ten months before the contest, the competitors were under the strictest obligations to refrain from every indulgence which might have impaired their strength. Another contrast with *μέν . . . δέ*: they verily, the foot-

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection : lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

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runners, **that they may get a corruptible crown** of pine-leaves (such at this time was a reward in the Isthmian games), we Christians **on the other hand, an incorruptible crown** of eternal life (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 12).

**26, 27.** The prize of the Christian race was infinitely more precious : **therefore I for my part** (*ἐγώ*) **so run as not uncertainly** (lit. *not unclearly*)—his course was *clear* : he saw the goal and pressed steadily and strenuously on to it. He changes the metaphor from running to boxing, to bring out the idea of the vigour with which the *foe* must be assailed. **So** (emphatic, and almost pictorial) **I box, as one beating a real enemy, not air.** The Christian struggle is not a sham-fight, but a fight with an enemy on whom sturdy blows must rain. Paul knew whereof he spoke : he had “fought with beasts at Ephesus” (xv. 32). **But on the contrary I beat my body—*his own body*** is the enemy—black and blue, and lead it away captive like a beaten antagonist, **lest haply, after having heralded salvation to others, I should turn out to be rejected myself.** The imagery of the games is kept up throughout the passage. *ἰπωπάζω*, to strike a heavy blow in the face, beneath the eyes (*ἰπὸ*, *ῳψ*). It is the word used in Luke xviii. 5, of the widow’s continuous assault upon the unjust judge. (*ἱποπάζω*, a less graphic word, *I press under*, is also read in the text before us.) *κηρύξας*, the regular word for *preaching*, appears here to have a flavour of its primary connotation, acting as *herald*—*κῆρυξ* : the herald announced the conditions of the game and the names of the victors : *ἀδόκιμος*, one who is rejected (from the prize).

The strenuousness of Paul’s religion is strikingly illustrated by this passage. The self-restraint which he practises is for the gospel’s sake (ver. 12), for others’ sake (ver. 22), and not less for his own sake. His work for others does not

## CHAPTER X

I MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

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exempt him from work upon himself : he faces the possibility of his ultimately losing the prize (ver. 27). Therefore he must fight, for his soul, with grim earnestness : his body is the enemy (Rom. viii. 13), and it must be a fight to the finish ( $\delta\sigma\upsilon\lambda\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\tilde{\omega}$ ). The “bruising” of the body must not be taken, as some extremists have taken it, literally : it is a figure, just like the running of the race. But it shows the deadly earnestness with which Paul engaged in this struggle with himself. The struggle with the body and all that it stands for, is not, if it be serious, a beating of the air, but a wrestling with a strong, resolute, and implacable foe. If Paul’s own struggle is so severe, the Corinthians and other men must see to it that they do not take their struggle and their race too lightly. It is only by *so* running—like the winner at the Greek games—that we can attain.

*The Danger of Relapse, as Illustrated by Ancient Israel (x. 1-13).*

The connection between this paragraph and the last, obscured by the *moreover* of A.V., is very intimate ( $\gamma\acute{a}\rho$  : R.V. *for*). Paul has just been showing the overwhelming importance of self-discipline. He himself practises it, not only for the sake of the gospel and of others, but for his own soul’s sake. It is not enough to enter upon the Christian race, we must run like the man who wins the prize. The Christian conflict is no sparring contest ; we must lay about us till the enemy is prostrate. There is always the grim possibility that one who has begun well may end badly ( $\hat{\alpha}\delta\delta\kappa\mu\omega\varsigma$ ). Steady, strenuous vigilance and perseverance will alone enable a man to “attain.” This principle is strikingly illustrated, Paul goes on to say, in the history of ancient Israel. They began well, enjoyed signal privileges, and in the end they were rejected : their bones bleached the desert. Those who shouted and sang over the victory at the Red Sea, never reached the promised land.

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea ;

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Their corpses lay scattered and inglorious upon the wilderness where they had played the apostate.

Therefore let the Corinthians take heed, and not become like them : let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. If Israel fell, and Paul contemplates for himself at least the possibility of a fall, let the Corinthians beware.

Further, this discussion of ancient Israel's sacramental experiences of baptism and the supper prepares the way for the discussion of the Christian sacrament and what it involved (x. 14-xi. 34).

**I-5.** The contrast in vv. 1-5 is between the *all*—πάντες five times repeated—who had enjoyed high privilege, and the very small minority (only two)—οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσι (ver. 5), who had been saved from destruction. This may be brought out in English by *while* or *though . . . yet*. **For**—considering the danger, to which I have just alluded, of ultimate reprobation (ix. 27)—**I would not have you ignorant, brethren** (the kindly address before the grave warning) : this phrase occurs several times in Paul's epistles, usually to introduce an important subject, which is either not adequately known or likely to be ignored (cf. Rom. xi. 25) ; **that, though ALL our fathers were under the cloud which guided their march** (cf. Ex. xiv. 19) and **ALL passed through the Red Sea, and ALL had themselves baptized** (*ἐβαπτίσαντο*) unto the leadership of Moses, and **ALL ate the same spiritual food and ALL drank the same spiritual drink**—for all the way **they kept drinking** (*πίνοντες*, impf.) of a spiritual rock which continually followed them (and the rock was Christ) : though, in short, **all our fathers enjoyed these privileges, yet not with the greater part of them**—indeed only with two, Caleb and Joshua (Num. xiv. 30)—**was God well-pleased** : so displeased was He that He destroyed them—for **they were laid prostrate in death in the wilderness** (Num. xiv. 16).

**I, 2.** *Our fathers* : they were strictly the fathers of the Jews. But Paul is probably not thinking of the Jews in the church of Corinth, but rather of the Christian church as one with ancient Israel. The *cloud* is that which guided their march

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;  
 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

(Ex. xiii. 21), and is specially mentioned in connection with the incident of the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 19). As the cloud was said to overshadow them (Ps. cv. 39), they could be described as *under the cloud*. The reference to the successful crossing of the Red Sea is primarily meant to illustrate the divine favour enjoyed by Israel, but the context shows that it was also intended to symbolize baptism: *In the cloud and in the sea they received or gave themselves unto baptism*. The middle voice *ἐβαπτίσαντο* is deliberately chosen to imply their consent (cf. vi. 11), and is undoubtedly to be preferred to the easier *ἐβαπτίσθησαν*, which is read by some MSS. By this experience they acknowledged their allegiance to Moses, gave themselves over to his leadership, and, in this sense *were baptized unto him*, as Christians were baptized unto Christ. The analogy between Israel's experience at the Red Sea and baptism is, to the modern mind, certainly not very close. The cloud and the sea represent the water: Israel went under the one and through the other on dry land—that is all. But Paul is interested here in detecting analogies between ancient Israel and the Christian church, and in finding in Israel's history anticipations of Christian sacraments and experiences: Christ Himself was present throughout the wilderness wanderings according to 4c.

3, 4. *All ate the same spiritual food*—not the same as we Christians eat; but all alike, each ate the same as the other, though the results were so different (cf. 5); *and all drank the same spiritual drink*. The food and the drink are the manna (Exod. xvi. 13 ff.) and the water of Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 1–6) at the one end of the wanderings, and of Kadesh (Num. xx. 2 ff.) at the other. But why then *spiritual*? The manna and the water are represented as miraculous: the manna, e.g. is in Ps. lxxviii. 24, food from heaven. This is part of the meaning, but not the whole of it. The miraculous manna was intended to point men beyond itself to the creating and sustaining power of God. “He fed thee with manna that he

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

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might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live" (Deut. viii. 3). The manna had a *spiritual* value: it was a testimony to a sphere beyond that of natural and sensuous experience (cf. ii. 14): so also the water, struck from the flinty rock (cf. Ps. lxxviii. 15 f.). The food and drink were intended to sustain the *spirit* as well as the body, and to strengthen faith in a spiritual order. Indeed, these things were witnesses not so much to an order as to a *presence*—the presence of Christ. The water which *they drank* came from a *spiritual rock* which followed them all the way, and that rock not only typified but actually was *Christ*. This thought may have been suggested to Paul by the Jewish tradition that the Israelites were accompanied on their march by a rock "globular, like a bee-hive," which rolled after the camp. The use of the word *spiritual* shows that Paul did not himself literally adopt this grotesque tradition, but he appears in this passage to have adapted it. The manna and the water (though only the latter is specifically alluded to in this connection) are manifestations of the wonder-working presence not so much of God, as of *Christ*, according to this passage. This implication of Christ in Israel's early history is very rare in the New Testament; for another illustration, cf. Heb. xi. 26, where Moses in Egypt bears "the reproach of Christ." Considering the preceding reference to baptism, and the subsequent allusion to the Lord's supper (vv. 16 f.), it seems highly probable that Paul regarded the food and drink of the wilderness as symbolic of that supper.

5. Many were called, but few were chosen. All were privileged, all but two were destroyed, just as in the Greek races, there were many competitors, but only one winner (ix. 24).

6. The situation in ancient Israel bids fair to be repeated in Corinth, and that story was written that we may take warning. Paul goes on to point the moral more explicitly. **Now these things**—Israel's initial privileges and ultimate fall—**were**

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

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made examples for us (rather than *in these things they proved types of us*) to the end that we do not lust incessantly (lit. *be not lusters, ἐπιθυμητάς*) after evil things, as they on their part (*kai*) lusted. History is too apt to repeat itself : *they* and *we*, the *fathers* (ver. 1) and the *children*—and so the sin rolls on, unless we allow ourselves to be taught by the fate of the fathers. They lusted after the good things of Egypt which they had left behind (Num. xi. 4, 5), and the Corinthians are similarly tempted by the attractions of the heathen life which they had nominally abandoned.

7. After this general warning, Paul now enumerates the temptations in detail. First and fundamental was idolatry. **Do not become idolaters, as some of them**, that is, the Israelites. That was their temptation—as it stands in scripture (Exod. xxxii. 6), “**The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play,**” on the occasion of their making of the golden calf—and no less is it your temptation in Corinth. The pointed reference to *eating* in connection with idolatry recalls the broad-minded brother who sat at table in the idol’s temple (viii. 10) and retrospectively condemns his conduct as practical idolatry (cf. ver. 21). Whether the play (*dancing*, Exod. xxxii. 19) took a licentious form or not, it is not without significance that the apostle mentions fornication immediately after idolatry (ver. 8). The worship of Aphrodite in Corinth certainly involved immorality, though it is hardly likely that a Christian would need to be warned against participation in such a cult as that.

8-10. **Nor let us commit fornication, as some of them did with the Moabitish women, as recorded in Num. xxv. 1-3.** This immorality was also the result of idolatry ; and the end of it was that **there fell in one day twenty-three thousand —twenty-four thousand**, according to Num. xxv. 9. Apparently

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them

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this is either a slip of memory on the part of Paul, or an error of some transcriber who mistook δ for γ'. **Nor let us put the patience of the Lord to the test** (cf. Isaiah vii. 13), as some of them did, when they complained that they had been brought up out of Egypt to perish in the wilderness (Num. xxi. 4-6; cf. xiv. 22), and they were destroyed (*ἀπώλλυντο*, graphic impf.) by the serpents. This testing of the divine patience, this challenging of the ways of God, is akin to the murmuring, against which Paul proceeds to caution the Corinthians. **Nor murmur, as some of them did** on many occasions (cf. Num. xiv. 2), but in particular on the occasion of the rebellion of Korah (Num. xvi. 41), and they were destroyed by the angel destroyer (Num. xvi. 46-49) who destroyed the first born of the Egyptians (Exod. xii. 23), many Israelites after the presumptuous sin of David (2 Sam. xxiv. 16) and the Assyrian host in Hezekiah's time (Isaiah xxxvii. 36). As the murmuring for which Israel was thus punished was against Moses and Aaron (Num. xvi. 41) it is possible, though the point should not be pressed, that the murmuring against which he is cautioning the Corinthians is against himself and his fellow-workers—such, for example, as the challenge of his apostleship (ix. 1-3). In favour of this view is the fact that he addresses his caution here, as in ver. 7, in the second person, whereas in vv. 8, 9, he includes himself with the Corinthians. There is an almost weird iteration in the *καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν*. Time after time Israel erred and was punished: similar sins and a similar fate are possibilities for the Corinthians, unless they allow themselves to be admonished (*νοοθεσία*, ver. 11) by the past.

11-13. Now these things one after the other (*impj.* *συνέβαινεν*), happened to those men by way of example, and they were written once for all (aorist, *ἐγράψη*) for the admonition of us, unto whom the ends of the ages have

for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

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**reached.** Each age has its own end, and the end of all is the age in which Paul was writing—the age ushered in by Christ and preceding His second coming. The Christian church was the heir of all the past : history culminated in it, and the lessons taught by the past were for the church's admonition. **Consequently**, as a fall is only too possible (witness the history of ancient Israel just alluded to) **let him that imagines he stands**, as the Corinthians, with their proneness to conceit, imagined, **beware lest he fall**. That is the lesson of the past. But, though there is the chance of falling, there is also the chance of overcoming : **for temptation has not overtaken you except such as men can bear** (lit. *human*) : and besides, **God can be trusted not to let you be tempted beyond your strength**, but with the temptation he will also make the way out, so that you can bear up under it. In other words, there is need of vigilance ( $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega$ ) on the part of man, and faith in the gracious will and the mighty power of God. God will watch those who watch themselves.

Paul believed that the end of the existing order of things was near (vii. 26, 31), and it was partly with this in view that he describes his generation as that on which the ends of the ages have come. But in a sense this is true of our own age and of every age. History has issued in us ; the past and its lessons are for us. Of the events of Israel's history uniquely, but more or less of the events of all history it may be said : *these things were examples for us* (ver. 6) and they were written

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

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*for our admonition* (ver. 11). This section illustrates the salutary influence of a knowledge of the past. *I would not have you ignorant, brethren.* We are reminded of the question of Jesus, *Have ye not read*—what David did? All the past is a source of instruction and warning, a revelation of the ways of God with men.

*The Lord or the Demons?* (x. 14–22).

14. The previous paragraph was a general warning against the danger of relapse, and more particularly a warning against idolatry. It was the idolatry of Israel that led to the fornication in ver. 8, and the first of the four specific warnings ran, “Do not become idolaters” (ver. 7). It is natural therefore that the next section should begin (or it may be, as some suppose, the last section ends) with the words: **Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.** The particular temptation to which the Corinthians were exposed, was, as we have seen (cf. note on viii. 10) probably that involved in retaining their membership in Pagan clubs, in which union was cemented by common participation in a sacrificial feast. Participation in such a feast is altogether incompatible with participation in the Lord’s supper, and this contrast is elaborated with great earnestness throughout the section.

15, 16. I speak as to men of good sense: judge of my statements for yourselves (*ὑμεῖς*). As for the cup which, at the institution of the supper, Jesus blessed, and which is thence known as **the cup of blessing**, the cup which **we**, that is, the church at large, or perhaps the presiding minister on its behalf —**bless** (that is, the cup over which we offer a prayer of thanksgiving: cf. Mark viii. 6, *εὐχαριστήσας*, 7, *εὐλογήσας*):

17 For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body : for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh : are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar ?

does it (this cup) not constitute a fellowship in the blood of **CHRIST**, with which any manner of fellowship with demons is inconceivable ? As for the bread which we break, does it not constitute a fellowship in the body of **CHRIST**? The cup is mentioned before the bread, as in Luke xxii. 17, 19, but cf. 20. It is not impossible that *the cup of blessing* was so called from one of the cups, which bore the same name, in the passover feast : the old name was confirmed and transformed by the blessing of Christ. Two kinds of fellowship are here suggested (a) that of the members with one another—by *sharing* something in common, they are *associated*; (b) that of the members with Christ : that which they share in common is not a thing, but a Person, Christ Himself in His sacrificial aspect, symbolized by the blood shed and the body broken. The association of the members with Christ is as real as their association with each other. “The power of the Saviour is imparted to them in the Sacrament ; and they became a brotherhood and a fellowship in virtue of their common relation to Him.” It is not merely sharing in a rite, but union with a Person.

17, 18. The stress of the argument lies on the fellowship of the members with *Christ*, which is incompatible with their fellowship with demons : verse 17 parenthetically indicates the importance of their fellowship with one another through their common participation in the sacramental bread. Seeing there is one bread, we, many though we be (lit. *the many*), are one body, for we all have a share from (*ἐκ*) the one bread. Against the translation of A.V. and R.V. (“for we being many are one bread, and one body,” A.V.; “seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body,” R.V.), the extreme improbability of *bread* being used in two entirely different senses in one short verse—in the former half figuratively, in the latter literally—may be decisively urged. Again, *ἐκ* must have its full force : “we partake (R.V. : are partakers, A.V.) of” would require the simple genitive. *ἐκ* is bold and graphic here :

19 What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?

20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

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it has its full force, and indicates the source by taking *from* which the members hold together, *have in common* (*μετά, ἔχω*). *That* is the bond which binds them. To illustrate this point, Paul asks his readers to consider the ritual practice of the Jews, **Israel after the flesh** (as opposed to the spiritual Israel: cf. Gal. vi. 16, iv. 29, Rom. ii. 29). **Do not those who eat the sacrifices have fellowship in the altar?** (lit. “are they not communicants of the altar?”). The Jews were firmly bound to each other by the participation in a common meal and to their God by the recognition of a common altar.

**19, 20.** Paul has been arguing for the reality of the communion between the worshippers and the object of their worship established by the sacrificial meal. A natural inference would be that he attributed reality to the idols at the heathen feasts, and this he has already denied (viii. 4, there is *no* idol in the world). So to guard against this false inference, he continues: **What is it then that I affirm? That a thing sacrificed to an idol is anything?** Certainly not: the earth and all its cattle are the Lord's, and meat will not affect our standing with God (viii. 8). **Or am I asserting that an idol is anything?** Certainly not: that I have already explicitly denied (viii. 4). **But** what I assert is this, that though the idol, the *image* itself, is nothing, these sacrifices do involve a real fellowship with demons. Evil spirits, under the leadership of Satan, had, according to a Jewish belief which Paul shared, real existence and influence, and were especially regarded as the inspirers of heathen cults (2 Cor. iv. 4, Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12): consequently, **the sacrifices which the heathen offer, they offer to demons, and not, as a liberally disposed person might maintain, to God**,—a quotation from Deut. xxxii. 17 (cf. Ps. cxi. 37)—and **I do not wish you to have fellowship in demons.** “Behind the idol to which the

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

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Pagan society sacrifices is a certain demonic power; and those who participate in the sacrificial feast become united in a mystic union with that power and with one another' (Ramsay in *Expositor*, 1900, vol. ii. p. 438, cf. 1901, vol. iii. p. 100 ff.).

21, 22. Such a mystic union was obviously completely exclusive of union with Christ. There was a spiritual incompatibility between them. No man can serve two masters. **Ye simply cannot drink the Lord's cup and the demons' cup: ye cannot share the Lord's table and the demons' table.** A Christian cannot bind himself by a solemn ritual to a power which is the enemy of Christ (cf. the *πόρνη* in vi. 15). **Or do we have the stupidity and the audacity to provoke the Lord to jealousy?** (cf. Deut. xxxii. 21). *The Lord* might be God, but coming immediately after ver. 21 (the cup and the table of the Lord), it is no doubt Christ. **Are we stronger than He?** Surely we do not suppose that we can brave with impunity the righteous indignation of the powerful Christ (cf. 2 Cor. xiii. 3).

The temptation for a broad-minded Corinthian to retain his fellowship in an association which had brought him stimulus, profit, or friendship must have been great. He could argue that the meat partaken of at the common meal was unobjectionable, because the idol to which it had been sacrificed was unreal, and that conscience therefore was in no way involved. Paul's answer is coloured by the beliefs of the time: the sacrifice is offered to real demons, and it throws the worshippers into real association with them—an association incompatible with their fellowship with Christ. The form of the argument is temporary, but the principle behind Paul's statement is permanently true. A Christian must not identify himself—least of all in a formal and solemn

manner—with influences which, however seemingly innocent in expression, are anti-Christian in their origin and presuppositions. The bond between Christians must be a *Christian* bond: any other bond is not only a disloyalty, but a contradiction. In the words of Professor Ramsay, “the danger which Paul dreads in the Pagan societies was the formation of a tie of brotherhood inconsistent with and opposed to the tie of Christian union. Intercourse with Pagans is not forbidden; one may mix in ordinary society, even though one knows that the Pagan does not obey those principles of pure life which the Christians must comply with. One may do business with them, accept their invitations, eat and drink with them; but one should not bind oneself to them by the ties of a common solemn ritual, which exercises a strong constraining force on the will and nature of man, and prevents him from real devotion to Christ” (*Expositor*, 1900, vol. ii. p. 439).

*The Limits of Liberty* (x. 23–xi. 1).

The last quotation will serve to introduce the next section, which discusses the legitimacy of buying in the open market or eating in a private house meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. This case is essentially different from that discussed in the last section. The idol is nothing, and the meat offered to it unobjectionable, yet there to partake of it was regarded as a practical denial of Christ, while here such conduct is tolerable. The difference is that there it was eaten at *the demon's table*, in a way which implied deliberate and formal association with demons; here it is bought in the market or eaten in a friend's house, where the *formal* association with demonic powers is absent, and the meat can be taken for what it is worth, as a gift of the Lord, to whom all the earth belongs (ver. 26).

Paul has a habit of returning, as here, to topics that he had discussed before (cf. viii.),—suggesting, what is on other grounds probable, that the letter was not all composed at one time. The cases here discussed would naturally be of frequent occurrence among the Corinthian Christians, and probably Paul had been expressly requested in their letter to discuss them.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that eat*, asking no question for conscience' sake.

26 For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

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23, 24. All things not in themselves reprehensible (such as murmuring, fornication, vv. 8, 9) are lawful: *for me* (*μοι*) in this clause and the next, have been wrongfully inserted in the text under the influence of vi. 12. There the point was the restriction of a man's liberty for his own sake, here for the sake of others. All things are lawful, but they are not all profitable, in the sense of *edifying*, as the next clause shows. All things are lawful, but they do not all build up the church (iii. 9). Here again, as in vi. 12, we may suppose that *all things are lawful* is said by the Corinthians, echoing perhaps a frequent word of Paul: the succeeding clauses will then be his retort. We must be prepared to limit our liberty for the church's sake, especially for the sake of the scrupulous brother. Liberty is a trust, to be used unselfishly: let no man seek merely his own good, but every man also *that of others* (lit. *the other*). This restriction of liberty by consideration of others is illustrated in the sequel (ver. 28).

25, 26. As all morally neutral things are possible, where no other conscience is concerned, anything that is sold in the market you may eat, without making any investigation for conscience' sake. The last clause is capable of two interpretations: (a) asking no questions, and that for the sake of conscience, that is, to keep conscience from being disturbed: or (b) asking no questions that arise out of conscientious scruples. (a) seems preferable. Paul is seeking to discourage the casuistical spirit: Bengel happily remarks "Scrupulosity is often more injurious than simplicity." Paul is here thinking apparently of the conscience of the

27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience' sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

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scrupulous brother (ver. 24). Where this is not involved, the Christian has a right to claim his liberty: **for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof**—an original and happy application of the text, Ps. xxiv. 1. If the earth and all that fills it is God's, nothing is common or unclean, and the meat sacrificed to idols, as it is really God's, is as pure as any other.

**27-30.** Similarly if one of the unbelieving Corinthians invites you to dinner, and you make up your mind to go—Paul does not forbid them (cf. v. 10), but he does not encourage them—anything that is set upon the table you may eat, without making any investigation for conscience' sake. The food is good, and if the question of its origin is not raised, the Christian may eat it freely. But, what if the question should be raised? If somebody say to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” what then? Whom are we to conceive as making this remark? Possibly an unbeliever who desires to embarrass the Christian; but more probably, from the sequel, a scrupulous Christian brother, as it is *his* conscience that is considered. It may be urged that a Christian would have used the word *εἰδωλόθυτον* (a thing sacrificed *to idols*), not *ἱερόθυτον* (a *sacred offering*); but he may well have used the latter word out of deference to his pagan host. When, then, you are definitely told that the meat has been offered to an idol, and another conscience will be affected by your conduct, do not eat it, for the sake of that man who gave the information and for conscience' sake, practically *for the sake of the conscience of the man who gave the information*, as the next verse makes very plain: **conscience, I mean, not your own, but the other man's.** So far as

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other : for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience ?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks ?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

*your* conscience is concerned, you are free : **for why is my liberty** — Paul identifies himself with the liberal-minded brother, and speaks in the first person—to be judged by **another conscience?** *Another conscience*—a very striking phrase, much stronger than *the conscience of another* : it as it were objectifies and personifies conscience. Another conscience may affect my action, but it cannot be a *conscience* for me : what *my* conscience judges to be my liberty, is still liberty for *it*. And if I on my part (*ἐγώ*) partake of such food thankfully, that is, by saying grace before it, why am I to be evil spoken of in regard to that for which I (*ἐγώ*) offer thanks ? “Every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. iv. 4), and no man has any right to speak evil of me, if I partake of such food, after offering up a prayer of gratitude. Paul is contending for the principle of Christian liberty ; for the sake of another, I may refuse to avail myself of it, but it does not cease to be my right. As Bengel says, “His weak conscience cannot deprive my conscience of liberty.” Findlay interprets differently : “What good end will be served by my eating under these circumstances, and exposing my freedom to the censure of an unsympathetic conscience ?” and in the next clause—if my thanksgiving leads to his blasphemy, what good end is served by that ? *ίνα τι* is elliptical : supply *γένηται*, in order that what may happen ? to what purpose ? why ?

x. 31-xi. 1. The argument is concluded (*οὖν*) as often in Paul, by an exhortation. **Whether then ye eat** food that has been sacrificed to idols or any other food, **or drink**, or do anything (practically =whatever else ye do), **do all things to the glory of God**, i.e. with that in view, with that as your end (*εἰς*) : **all** (*πάντα*, first and emphatic) your conduct should be

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God :

33 Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own *profit*, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

## CHAPTER XI

1 BE ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

a progress towards that, a contribution to that. **Give no offence either to Jews**, by needlessly wounding their scruples, **or to Greeks**, e.g. by an unrestricted use of your liberty, **or to the church of God** by disregarding, e.g. the prejudices of the scrupulous. All classes of men alike (*kai-kai-kai*) were to be conscientiously considered—those without the church (Jews and Greeks), and those within. This was Paul's own practice : **even as I also please** (that is, accommodate myself to, cf. ix. 22) **all men in all things, not seeking my own advantage**, but that of the many (cf. ver. 24) **that they may be saved**. This being his own practice (*ἀρέσκω*) as well as principle, he could afford to say, **Show yourselves imitators of me, as I on my part** (*καὶγώ*) (*am*) **of Christ**, who pleased not Himself, but gave Himself to and for others. The glory of God and the good (*ἱρά σωθῶσιν*) of men—these are the two master-motives of the true Christian life.

It is significant that the phrase *for conscience' sake*, which occurs three times in this passage (vv. 25, 27, 28) should refer to the conscience of others (*τὴν τοῦ ἔτερου*). Christianity is always considering *the other man*; and in every delicate problem his conscience is a factor as well as mine. Society and the church have to be edified, but they are edified, not by knowledge, but by love (viii. 1); and the good man will be prepared to restrict his liberty for his brother's sake. At the same time that liberty remains, and (on what seems the more appropriate interpretation of vv. 29, 30), Paul is as anxious to defend the liberty of the one man as the conscience of the other. The earth is the

Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and the more the scruples of the narrow-minded brother are dispelled by clearer insight and growing charity, the wider will be the range of actual as well as of theoretical liberty, till all morally neutral things will be possible. But in the meantime it is our duty, in matters that do not violate principle, to accommodate ourselves "in all things to all men," with the hope and the aim of winning and saving them. This is the true *Imitatio Christi*.

## THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP (xi.-xiv.)

### CHAPTER XI

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

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After the elaborate discussion of the Christian's relation to idolatry and the customs with which it was implicated, it is fitting that the apostle should turn to the consideration of the question of true worship. This was the more necessary, as abuses had grown up in connection with the conduct of public worship. The women had claimed and enjoyed an unseemly prominence, and the Lord's supper had been administered in a manner not only unbecoming, but disgraceful. Paul proceeds therefore to consider these questions, and others connected with the public life of the church, such as the exercise of spiritual gifts; and this leads him to discuss the mutual dependence of the members of the church, and the incomparable superiority of love.

#### *Women and the Veil* (xi. 2-16).

One of the indirect results of Paul's preaching was a growing assertiveness on the part of the women. His great and daring words were liable to misunderstanding and abuse. The doctrine that "all things are possible to me" had been interpreted as licence, and the doctrine that "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, *there can be no male and female*; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28), easily lent itself to similar misinterpretation. Paul has to remind the Corinthians of their duty to remain in the state in which they had been called (vii. 20, 24); instead, slaves

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God.

had been yearning for liberty, and Christian women, as we learn from this chapter, had begun to throw off the conventional marks of their subordination to men, and to assert the equality with them which they believed themselves, as Christians, to possess. Paul's great doctrine of equality was beginning to be practically applied by them in disturbing and possibly dangerous ways : and in the interests of "comeliness and order," perhaps also for the fair name of the gospel, Paul utters a word of warning.

2. Reproof is coming ; so Paul, with his customary tact (cf. i. 4) strikes a note of eulogy at the beginning. Now (in δέ he passes to a new subject) I praise you that in all things ye have remembered and still remember me (pf. μέμνησθε), and in particular that ye maintain the traditions just as I delivered them to you. This eulogy, as Lietzmann suggests, may have been occasioned by a remark in the Corinthian letter to Paul to this effect : "As we are always at pains to follow your instructions, we should like you to state your opinion with regard to the veiling of women at divine service." It is difficult to reproduce in English the echo so obvious in the Greek παρέδωκα τὰς παραδόσεις. The word *traditions* too is somewhat misleading : it is simply something handed on, committed to, another ; and here no doubt refers to the instructions in matters of discipline and doctrine expressly given (aor. παρέδωκα) to the church by Paul. For such a "tradition" of doctrine, cf. xv. 3, where the same word is used ; and of practice, cf. xi. 23. It is not expressly said in the passage before us, as in these two passages, that Paul had himself received (παρέλαβον : from the Lord, xi. 23) the instructions which he passed on to them ; and perhaps, as the matter he is about to discuss, simply affects church discipline and order, we are to regard these instructions as given simply on his own initiative. Even *nature herself* (ver. 14) should have taught the offenders the propriety of the course he is urging.

3. But, though you have observed, as you say, my instructions, there are matters which still need to be amended. I

## I CORINTHIANS XI

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4 Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

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**desire you therefore**—Paul is very earnest—to know: the Corinthians, despite their wisdom, had not realized that equality in essential respects is perfectly consistent with subordination in other respects, and that society, including the church, is an ordered system, whose mutual relationships must be strictly observed. This Paul puts tersely and concretely, when he says he would have them know that of every man, Christian and Pagan alike, **Christ is the head**, for He is the one Lord of creation, through whom are all things (viii. 6) : **while the man is head of woman, and God is head of Christ** (cf. iii. 23). In the Christian sphere, woman and man are *mutually* dependent, as Paul admits in ver. 11 : indeed on an essential equality (Gal. iii. 28). Yet in the practical relations of society and church, the ordinary distinction between the sexes holds ; the man is head, and the true woman will not aspire to that supremacy, any more than Christ would aspire to equality with God (Phil. ii. 6).

**4, 5.** As man has no visible head or superior, he must not wear a symbol of submission : but as woman's head is man, she must wear such a sign—in her case, the veil. **Any man praying or prophesying**—the New Testament prophet is one who is inspired to speak words of edification and comfort to the church (xiv. 3)—**with (lit. having) (a veil hanging) down from his head, disgraces his head**, that is, by wearing this token of submission. But what is meant by the second reference to *his head*? Is it *Christ*, as is implied by the previous verse? or is “head” to be taken literally, as it is earlier in the verse. The former is tempting, especially after the explicit definition of ver. 3, but the latter is, on the whole, the more natural. The same doubt gathers about the allusion to the woman's head later in the verse. It is not implied that any man did thus pray or prophesy veiled ; but the disgrace implied in this imaginary case illustrates the woman's disgrace all the more forcibly. **And any woman praying or prophesying with bare head** (lit. with

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

her head uncovered) **disgraces her head**, whether *man* (ver. 3) or her own head—some MSS. actually read *ἴαυτης*. The disgrace of a woman speaking in public with bare head, was all the greater, as it was a disgrace for her to speak in public at all: women should be silent in church (xiv. 34, 1 Tim. ii. 12). Paul, however, attacks here only the immodesty involved in discarding the veil, which greatly aggravated the offence of their speaking at all: his protest against this latter offence he reserves till xiv. 34. In public, Greek women drew the upper fold of the robe over the head like a hood. The woman who prayed bare-headed had disgraced her head, **for she is one and the same as the woman who**, like slave-women and adulteresses, **is shaven**. Courtesans wore no veil: consequently a Christian woman who wore none would be exposing herself to the gravest misunderstanding. In her shamelessness she would seem to be little better than an adulteress, whose head was shaved by way of penalty. In spite of the neuters *εν* and *τὸν αὐτὸν*, the participle *τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ* shows that we must translate *she* (not *it*) is the same; the other would require the infinitive, *τῷ ἐξυρῆσθαι*.

6. The frequent repetition of *γὰρ* shows how closely the argument is knit. **For if a woman is unveiled** (*οὐ*, not *μή*, forms one idea with the verb) **let her** take a step further and **cut her hair close**—she shows her shamelessness by removing the covering prescribed by custom, she may as well remove that provided by nature—but **if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut close or shaved** (and even the Christian women who pray bareheaded would admit this) **then let her cover herself** with a veil.

7. Another reason for his contention Paul derives from the story of the creation. **For man** (or *a man*) **ought not to have his head covered**, seeing that he is, as Genesis i. 26

8 For the man is not of the woman ; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman ; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

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declares him to be, “**the image**” and **glory of God** : he is like God in his dominion over the world, and the splendour of God is visibly reflected in him. He wears no symbolic veil, as he has no visible superior. **But the woman is the glory**—she could not strictly be called the image—of man, reflecting the qualities which give him his true worth, and as such she ought to wear the veil, which symbolizes her subordination. The force of the argument from Scripture is somewhat weakened, in substance, though not in the letter, by the fact that the very next verse after the one Paul quotes (Gen. i. 27) reads : “God created man in his own image ; male *and female* created He them.”

**8-10.** Two other reasons for the wearing of the veil ; woman was created *from* man (ver. 8) and *for* him (ver. 9). **For**, referring to the creation story in Gen. ii., **man is not from woman, but woman from man**, being formed of one of his ribs. **For also man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake**, to be his helper. First the man, then the woman : man is prior to the woman in time and in importance, according to the argument. **On this account the woman ought** (*όφειλει*, as the man ought not, *οὐκ οφειλει*, ver. 7), **to have the sign of the man's authority upon her head, by reason of the angels**, who are apparently conceived (cf. Gal. iii. 19) as guardians of the divine order (including the relation of the sexes) established at creation, and present, though unseen, at the public worship of the church. In iv. 9, angels as well as men eagerly watch the pathetic fortunes of the apostles, just as here apparently they watch the conduct of the worshippers. Another possible explanation of this difficult phrase connects it with the story of Gen. vi. 2, according to which the angels fell in love with mortal women ; the implication here being that women, who appear unveiled, may be the cause of similar temptation.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman, but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourselves : is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her : for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

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11, 12. At this point Paul feels the necessity of qualifying his argument somewhat. Its drift has been to emphasize the subordination of woman : and *yet* that does not completely represent Paul's view : for **neither is woman apart from man nor man apart from woman in the Lord**. In the Christian sphere there is a mutual dependence of the sexes, in the Christian order both are necessary, each is the complement and counterpart of the other. **For just as the first woman was made from the man, so now, in the ordinary course of nature, the man enters the world through the woman** : the first woman owed her being to man, all subsequent men owe their being to women ; **and all—men, women, and things—are from God**, have their source (*ἐκ*) in Him, and depend upon Him. Here, by one of his deft touches, Paul lifts the matter out of the region of controversy, and sets it in a larger light (cf. iii. 23).

13-15. But altogether apart from Scripture, Paul feels that he may safely appeal to the common sense of the Corinthians, and to their instinct for the social proprieties. **Judge ye among yourselves : is it becoming for a woman to be unveiled when she prays to God ?** (the addition *to God* heightens the unseemliness of her conduct). Not only, however, does instinct point to that conclusion, but also that outward order of things which we call *nature*. Why, **does not even nature itself teach you that a man's long hair is a dishonour to him, while a woman's is her glory ?** for her hair has

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

been given her, as woman's permanent gift (perf. *δέδοται*), instead of a covering, and to serve the purpose of a veil. This appeal to *nature*, a favourite word of Aristotle's, is of peculiar interest in the pages of Paul.

16. Having urged his argument from the standpoint of social convention, Scripture, common sense, and nature, Paul brings the discussion to a peremptory conclusion. **N**ow if any one presumes to be contentious, WE (*ημεῖς*, emphatic) have no such custom, nor have the churches of God. Some have seen in this abrupt conclusion a suspicion, on the part of Paul, that his arguments were inadequate. This appears to do him less than justice. He has pursued the discussion as long as he is accustomed to do in such cases, and his arguments are similar to those he employs elsewhere ; for example, in his discussion of the maintenance of the ministry (ix. 1-14). In *we have no such custom*, he does not mean the custom of being contentious, but of allowing women to take public part in the worship unveiled. He does not believe in the custom himself, nor is it practised, as perhaps the Corinthians think, by other churches of God : the last two words lend a certain solemnity to the conclusion—quite in Paul's manner.

This singularly interesting discussion of the use of the veil for women when they are taking, as Paul thinks they should not take (xiv. 34), a prominent part in public worship is both very remote from, and very near to, the interests of the modern world. To a modern mind, most of the arguments by which Paul supports his contention are distinctly unconvincing. His description of man as the glory of God while woman is only the glory of man, does not commend itself to us, nor is it apparently in the spirit of Gen. i. 27. Nor would the use which he makes of the ancient Hebrew story of the creation of woman from man satisfy a modern mind, nor his view that man was not made for woman, but only woman for man. The phraseology, like the arguments, moves in another world than ours, notably ver. 10 (literally, "the woman ought to have authority upon her head on account of the angels"). The subordination of women for which Paul is pleading, and which

he carries so far as to prescribe for them silence, seems to move upon a lower plane than the great assertion in Galatians iii. 28, that "there can be no male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus," and lower than the admission in this very context that "neither is woman without man nor man without woman in the Lord."

But while the arguments of Paul may be unconvincing, his conclusions we feel to be right. Ideally, there is neither male nor female, all are one in Christ ; but practically, distinctions between the sexes subsist and must be recognized. Religion does well to respect the conventions, unless when the conventions themselves are opposed to religion. Whether a woman should or should not wear a veil when addressing a religious meeting, may seem a very insignificant matter for an apostle to discuss, especially an apostle who laid so little stress on external things (vii. 19). But even seemingly insignificant matters may, on occasion, be of the gravest importance. Only women of the lowest type would appear unveiled in Corinth ; and a Christian woman who did so would expose herself and her religion to the certainty of misunderstanding. That particular application of Christian liberty, in that particular age, could only lead to harm ; but it does not follow that it would be illegitimate under the very different circumstances of our own age.

Again, in spite of the essential equality of the sexes, the teaching of instinct (*πρέπον*, what is seemly) and nature (*ἡ φύσις*) have to be considered in questions of practical conduct. Christianity may have to reform convention : but if convention be the embodiment of a principle fundamental to the order of society, Christianity will confirm and transform it.

#### *The Lord's Supper (xi. 17-34).*

This section, dealing with the abuses which characterized the Corinthian celebration of the Lord's supper, is closely connected with the previous section, different though its theme may seem to be, in that they both deal with the decorum which Christians are bound to observe in their public assemblies. Of this decorum the unseemly selfishness displayed at the Supper was a violation in one direction, just as the unveiled women were in another. But there is a peculiar solemnity about this discussion, manifesting itself some-

17 Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

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times in a certain stately repetition as well as in the general tone of it, which shows how much more serious to Paul was the one abuse than the other. The one was a violation of instinct and nature; this is a crime against the Lord Himself, for which heavy punishment has already fallen (ver. 30), and there is danger of a judgment yet more terrible (ver. 34).

This passage also illustrates admirably the casual and occasional nature of Paul's epistles. The solemn injunctions relative to the Lord's supper, which have for so long controlled the practice of the church, really owe their origin to the scandalous celebrations of the Corinthian church, which Paul is here censuring. They are at once a rebuke and a model; and we might never have had the model, but for the need of the rebuke.

17. Now in giving this charge. It is difficult to say whether Paul means the charge which he has just given regarding the veiling of the women, or that which he is about to give, regarding the seemly celebration of the supper—that a man must examine himself (ver. 28) and wait for his neighbour (ver. 33); on the whole, the former seems the more natural. The first words of the new paragraph connect the one charge with the other: that Paul has the former paragraph in mind is plain from his repetition of the word *praise* (*επανω*, ver. 17) which looks back to ver. 2. There were many things for which he could praise the Corinthians, other things—one in particular—which deserved the sharpest censure; though Paul, by a polite understatement, simply says that in this thing **I do not praise you**. His implied censure is relative to the conduct and results of their public meetings. He has the sacrament, no doubt, specially in view, but he begins with the general statement, **that your meetings do not tend to** (*εἰς*) **your improvement, but to your deterioration**. When Christians come together, the result should be that they become better; instead, the Corinthians become worse. They are confirmed, not in brotherly feeling towards one another, and in devotion to their common Lord, but in greed and selfishness. The apostle could not praise that.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

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**18, 19. For**—the general charge Paul is prepared to support by particulars, which he has indeed upon hearsay (*ἀκούω*), but which he has no good reason to doubt—in the first place: this phrase is not followed up by any *ἔπειτα δέ* (in the second place), and possibly Paul is not thinking for the moment of any second and subsequent charge. The word may be simply used to introduce the charge, and to suggest its serious nature. Those who maintain that the phrase implies a second charge, either refer the first to the schisms (vv. 17–19), and the second to the abuses in connection with the supper (vv. 20 ff.), or the first to the whole section (vv. 17–34), and the second to the abuse of spiritual gifts which he proceeds to discuss in xii. However, whether a second charge is distinctly in view or not, **I hear**—his information is apparently continuous (*ἀκούω*) and does not rest upon a single informant—that at your meetings in church (not the building, but the Christian assembly) divisions exist among you, divisions, not of an intellectual or dogmatic kind, though they existed too (i. 10), but those more hateful divisions built upon social distinctions, which expressed themselves in practical contempt for the poor (ver. 22). Paul has only too good reason to suspect that his information is true, if not all of it, at least some of it, and **I partly believe it**. **For** of course, in a sense, divisions are inevitable (cf. Mat. xviii. 7) and **there must also be parties among you**: *αἵρεσις* has not yet the developed meaning of *heresy*, nor is it even *sect* (cf. Acts xxviii. 22). It primarily indicates *choice*, and its use here shows how naturally it might pass into the other meanings. These divisions, however, deplorable as they are, serve a divine purpose: they are part of the order of things, in order that the reputable among you (lit. those that are approved) may be shown as such. The parties, while they reveal the depravity of some, reveal no less the

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry and another is drunken.

excellence of others. Bousset, however, regards ver. 19 as ironical. "The Corinthians may have suggested that these contests in the church had the advantage of bringing out who had right on his side. Paul contents himself with an ironical repetition of that dangerous doctrine. He has already told us what he believes of party contests in the church, of their harm and uselessness."

**20-21.** The divisive and sectional spirit of which he has just complained, is illustrated with special force in the conduct of the Corinthians at the celebration of the Lord's supper. It was common in the Greek world of those days for guilds, clubs, or societies, united by a common interest, to dine together at regular intervals; so that the idea of a common meal as the expression of a corporate spirit, would be suggested to the Corinthian Christians as well by the usages of society as by their desire to commemorate the last supper of our Lord. This church-supper probably took place originally once a week, on the first day (Acts xx. 7). The love-feast, as this common meal was called (cf. Jude 12), was apparently followed (some think preceded) by the celebration of the Lord's supper. The supper was conducted in such a way at Corinth that it was no love-feast, or Lord's supper at all. It was such abuses as are censured here that later led to the separation of the love-feast from the Lord's supper and ultimately to the abolition of the former altogether.

This section is closely connected with the last (cf. *οὗτον* and the deliberate repetition of *συνερχομένων ἵμαν*). The divisions there deplored manifest themselves in their celebration of the supper here censured. **In your church gatherings, then, by no possibility is it the supper of THE LORD that ye are eating.** Either, "*it is not possible* to eat the Lord's supper"; or "*that is not* an eating of the Lord's supper": in either case, the accent falls on *κυριακόν*. Each came when he pleased, and ate by himself; it was therefore a *private* supper, *ἴδιον*

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

*δεῖπνον*, but not a supper of *the Lord*. There was no sense of community about it either with one another or with the Lord whom it was supposed to commemorate: not with one another—for the rich showed no consideration for the poor; and not with the Lord—for the whole manner of the celebration was a scandal, and totally *unworthy* of Him (ver. 27). It was no supper of the Lord, for every man hurries to take his own supper at the meal: that is, there was no *waiting* for one another, such as Paul later enjoins (ver. 33), but the rich man, as soon as he arrives, hastens to consume what he has brought (*προλαμβάνει*, anticipates others in taking it) so as to be under no obligation of dividing it with the poor man, who, unlike the rich man, is perhaps not master of his time, and so may be compelled to come later. Where the meal was eaten in such a straggling fashion, it is plain that there can have been little place for prayer and for the solemn words of consecration which ought to have accompanied it (vv. 23–25), so that from every point of view, the celebration was a scandal: and while one is hungry, another is drunk, and this at the most solemn meal of Christian brethren! not only brotherliness and hospitality forgotten, but even decency thrown to the winds—unless indeed we adopt a milder interpretation, “drinks to satiety.”

22. In the light of so shocking a scandal, is it any wonder then the apostle asks with indignant irony: So ye have no houses, have ye not, for eating and drinking in? Surely they would not bring their too healthy appetites to the church meeting, if they had houses, in which those appetites could be satisfied. But, as they are in point of fact very well off (*οἱ έχοντες*, pre-eminently *those who have*, ver. 22), then their only motive appears to be deliberate contempt of the church. Or is it that ye despise the church, which is no institution of man’s founding, but the great church of God? By this dignified term the apostle sets in the more glaring light the disgraceful conduct of its members. And are ye affronting

**23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread :

**the poor?** God, to whom the church belongs, Christ, who founded the sacrament, and the poor who were chosen to be "heirs of the kingdom" (James ii. 5), were all alike insulted in this celebration. The poor are made to feel shame by their supercilious treatment at the hands of the church. *Those who have not*, the class (*μή*) rather than the individuals (*οἱ*), are clearly the poor ; it would be jejune to argue from the *οἰκιας οὐκ ἔχετε* at the beginning of the verse, that the reference is to "those who have not (*houses*)."<sup>1</sup> Paul is sorrowfully indignant, but he speaks with fine self-control. **What am I to say to you? Am I to praise you?** Deserving of praise as you may be in other points (ver. 2), in this point at least—and a very serious one it is—I do not praise you (cf. ver. 17), a mild understatement ; he really means—so serious an offence is worthy not of praise, but of rebuke.

**23.** He cannot commend the Corinthians ; for the tradition which he had received from the Lord and handed on to them was of a very different kind from that to which they were conforming. **For as for me** (*ἐγώ*)—so far as the tradition is concerned, he is the connecting link between the Lord and them—I received from the Lord that which I have also delivered to you. The preposition *ἀπό* simply indicates in a general way source or origin, and does not necessarily imply the direct personal communication which would have been suggested by *παρά* ; so far as the preposition is concerned, Paul's knowledge of the institution may have rested simply upon apostolic tradition. But the whole tone of the context, and the verb *παρέλαβον*, which seems to point back to a definite historical occasion, rather suggest that Paul had some special revelation, as, for example, in a vision. In the very similar sentence in xv. 3, Paul simply says he "received" (same word) certain truths, without mentioning their origin. The personal touch here adds a warmth and solemnity to his statement. "All that he heard about Jesus," says Lietzmann, "before and after his conversion, appears to him as a gift received at Damascus from the Lord Himself." Like a Jewish rabbi, Paul passed on

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.

his instruction from his Master to his pupils : with a true sense of the importance of such a "tradition" from the Master, he not only received it, but *also* (*καὶ*) delivered it—delivered it, too, to the very people who were now so flagrantly disregarding it (*ὑμῖν*).

**23, 24.** What he had received and delivered was this, that the Lord Jesus—(not Christ, but *Jesus* : the use of His earthly name carries us back to certain great historical facts)—in the night on which He was being betrayed, took bread. The imperfect tense (*παρεδίδετο*) graphically summons up the whole scene, and in the mention of His betrayal is a latent rebuke of the Corinthian disorders. Surely they had altogether forgotten the pathetic circumstances attending the origin of the institution of the Supper, or they could never have celebrated it with such indecency. It was One who was being betrayed who desired to be remembered, and this was how they were remembering Him ! He took bread, and having offered a prayer of thanksgiving (very wonderful on the night of his *betrayal* ; thanksgiving amid treachery), He brake it. The bread was broken for distribution : here is another tacit censure of the Corinthians, who never thought of distribution, but *took each man his own supper*. There could be no more flagrant contrast than that between the *Lord's* supper, and the *Corinthian* supper. Jesus not only performed the act, He explained it : He broke the bread and said : This is my body which is for you (see 2 Cor. v. 21). It is plain that, as Jesus is standing there in the flesh before His disciples, there can be no thought of the bread being literally His body ; but it *represents* His body in that it was broken, and broken on their behalf, and implicitly on behalf of all who sustain the relation of discipleship to Jesus, therefore on behalf of the Corinthian converts and of us. True, the original text read simply *τὸν ὑπέρ ὑμῶν*, which is for you ; *κλάωμενον* (broken) is a later gloss, which, however, is quite correct as an interpretation. The breaking of the body is a reference to His death, which becomes more explicit in the following allusion to His blood. Paul here by implication, and

25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

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in ver. 26 directly, reminds the selfish and flippant Corinthians, that they are not only celebrating a supper, but commemorating a death. What Jesus had done, His disciples were to do—take the bread, give thanks and break it: **this do in remembrance of me**, and this they were to do continually (*pres. imperative*) on every occasion on which the supper was celebrated. The object of it all was *to keep* the participants *in mind of Him*, and especially of His death for them; the Corinthians showed, by their conduct at the supper, that they were far enough from remembering Him and His death.

25. In like manner also He took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, after supper. In the original celebration, the eating of the bread was apparently part of the common meal: it was *while they were eating* that He took bread (cf. Mark xiv. 22), and at the conclusion of the meal He takes the symbolic cup, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood.**” As the bread represented the body, so the wine represents the blood. This is the form the statement assumes in Mark xiv. 24 (Mat. xxxvi. 28). “This (the cup of wine) is my blood of the covenant”: but the statement of Paul is practically identical: “**This cup is the new covenant (standing or established) in my blood,**” in accordance with the Old Testament idea that in a covenant between God and men the shedding of blood is necessary. The *new covenant* glances back to the great prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxii. 31-34) who proclaimed for the coming days a covenant which would guarantee a universal knowledge of God, and a complete forgiveness. Jesus claims that in and through His death this covenant has been established. In the Greek word διαθήκη, attention is directed rather to God as the arranger of it, than to its mutuality. **This do** (take the cup, give thanks, and pass it round) continually (*pres. imperative*), **as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.** Some, by rendering strictly, *as often as ye drink*, refer the injunction generally, to every occasion on which men drank in common; but the scope of the words is clearly meant to be limited to the occasions on which

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

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they met to celebrate the Lord's supper. The repetition of the words *This do, etc.*, produces a very solemn effect. The account in Luke xxii. 17-20 corresponds more closely than that of Matthew xxvi. 26-29 or Mark xiv. 22-25 with the account of Paul. It is noteworthy that the words "for you" and "this do in remembrance of me" are peculiar to Paul, and are not found in the evangelists (except in Luke xxii. 19, 20, where the true text appears originally to have stopped at *This is my body* in ver. 19). These words give the feast, which is sacramental, a memorial character.

26. The words that follow are appended by Paul to the communication he had received from the Lord. He wishes to make it abundantly plain that it is *the death* of the Lord that the feast is intended to commemorate: indirectly this has the effect of showing what a travesty of that solemn supper the Corinthian celebration was. **For, as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, it is nothing less than the death of the Lord that ye are declaring.** The eating and drinking was a rehearsal of the original scene, and was therefore in itself, in one sense, an acted proclamation: it is unnecessary therefore to regard *καταγγέλλετε* as imperative ("proclaim"). At the same time, the choice of this word, and the analogy of the Passover, whose rites the father had to explain to his son (Exodus xiii. 8), render it highly probable that the ceremony was accompanied by some words on the part of the leader. The bread and the wine were but symbols: they were only necessary **until He come**—after He came in person, they would be superfluous. The date of His coming was unknown, but the coming itself was certain: this is suggested by the omission of *αν*.

27-29. If, then, the supper commemorates the death of the Lord, any violation of its spirit must be a peculiarly heinous offence. **Consequently, any one who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily**—for example, in the

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

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selfish and gluttonous manner described in ver. 21—shall be guilty of violating the body and the blood of the Lord. A statement like this lends some countenance to the view that, for Paul, the bread and wine were very much more than symbols, and that in some mystic sense, Christ was really present in them. He does not say, "Such a one shall be guilty of disobedience to a most solemn injunction of the Lord," nor even, "shall be guilty of dishonouring His death," but "shall be guilty of His body and blood," as if they were in some peculiar sense identified with the emblems: and the great sin which brings "judgment" on a man is his failure to distinguish between the holy bread of the supper, which is "the body" of Christ, and ordinary bread (ver. 29). Such a view ought not to be summarily dismissed as impossible, though it certainly is not in the spirit of Jesus: but there can be no question that, whatever idea underlies the particular expression of Paul, his essential meaning is that the death of Jesus, with all that that implied, was most gravely dishonoured by such an unseemly celebration as that of which the Corinthians had been guilty. The way to avoid the guilt of such an offence was the way of self-examination. **But let a man** (*ἄνθρωπος* is more weighty than *ἔκαστος* would have been) **put himself to the proof**—test, by earnest consideration, his attitude to the supper and to the death of the Lord which it commemorates, testing himself not once for all, but every time he partakes of it (*pres.* imperative), **and so**, after such a self-examination, **of the bread let him eat and of the cup let him drink**—again the stately repetition which invests the narrative with a solemnity of its own. **For he that eateth and drinketh** (the *unworthily* of A.V. is a gloss from ver. 27) **eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, if he does not distinguish the body of the Lord**, as represented by the food and drink of the holy supper, from all other food and drink. The rendering of *κρίμα* in A.V. by *damnation* is peculiarly unfortunate; final condemnation,

30 For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

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such as that which is meted out to the world (ver. 32) is the very thing which such *judgments* as are described in the next verse are designed to obviate. Still, the warning is serious enough ; for the “*judgment*” has already fallen, not only in the shape of sickness, but of death, upon those *who do not discern the body* (the better texts omit *τοῦ κυρίου*, of the Lord), that is, upon those who make no distinction, do not discriminate between the holy bread and ordinary bread. Roman Catholics have argued from the *or* in ver. 27 (eats the bread *or* drinks the cup : A.V. wrongly *and*) that the partaking of the bread alone, communion in one kind, is adequate ; but elsewhere throughout the passage the eating and the drinking go together (cf. vv. 26, 28). In any case the argument is fallacious ; it does not follow that, because unworthy participation in one element is a sin, worthy participation in only one element would be an adequate discharge of the two communion obligations, which Jesus deliberately co-ordinated.

30-32. Some had failed to “discern the body” of the Lord, in the sense above described : **that is why** many among you are sick and weak and not a few are sleeping the sleep of death. This is the form that the *judgment* took (ver. 29), and it fell upon a good many. Bousset suggests that behind this statement lies the unconscious feeling that the evil consequences were directly produced by the unworthy participation in the (miraculous) food and drink : this would tend to support the view that the Lord was supposed to be, in some real though mystical sense, in the elements. It is equally in accordance, however, with Jewish belief, to regard these judgments as being sent, inflicted externally as it were, as a punishment for sin. *Sleep* is used of Christian *death* (cf. vii. 39, 1 Thes. iv. 13). The sin which was thus punished, originated

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home;

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in lack of discrimination along two directions ; one has just been mentioned (ver. 29), the other had been a failure on the part of the Christians to distinguish adequately between themselves and the world (ver. 32). Its ideals and its destiny (condemnation) were different from those of the Christian ; the Corinthians had not discriminated. If they had—or rather, if *we* had, as Paul says, by a courteous inclusion—they should not have been suffering as they are. **Now, if we had been discriminating ourselves from the world, we should not have been suffering from these judgments.** But after all, these judgments, terrible as some of them are, are by no means tantamount to a final condemnation ; they are discipline, divinely designed to purify, and to save from condemnation on the great day of the Lord. **But when we are thus under judgment, it is by the Lord we are being disciplined.** These are the two consolations : the punishment is discipline, and it comes from the Lord (whether God, or Christ, whose Supper had been so dishonoured). The object of the discipline, stern though it may be, is that **we may not be condemned with the wicked world**, in the day when the Lord comes in judgment.

33, 34. Paul sums up the discussion, as often, with an exhortation : after the stern words of the last few verses, he speaks in a gentler tone, calling them his *brethren*. **So then, my brethren, when ye come together** (same word as in vv. 18, 20) **to eat the Lord's supper**, do not selfishly and hastily eat what you have brought as soon as you arrive—that is a private supper, not the Lord's—but **wait for one another**. The true Christian will be patient ; and while he will examine himself inwardly, he will not forget the seemliness and order which ought always to characterize a Christian assembly (xiv. 40), but most of all the celebration of the supper. In it, he will think of the Lord, rather than of the supper ; its primary object is to commemorate Him, not to appease hunger. Therefore if a man is hungry, let him dine at home, lest your meetings issue in judgment : the sort of participation which

that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

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was common in Corinth could only end in one way, in the sort of judgments that had already befallen the church (ver. 30). In this terrible sense, they would "meet together for the worse" (ver. 17). There are other matters affecting public worship and possibly the communion service, in which Paul has further instructions to give; but **the rest I will arrange when I may come**—he hopes to come soon (iv. 19).

Circumstances have so changed that the particular abuses which had crept into the celebration of the Lord's supper at Corinth are no longer possible to-day: yet Paul's warnings are not without their point even for us. Every service of the church should tend "to the better" (ver. 17), to our edification and improvement, and most of all the solemn service which commemorates the death of our Lord. It ought to be a *communion* service, communion with Him and with one another; in Corinth the presence of "divisions" (ver. 18) was painfully obvious, and never is the divisive spirit so lamentable as in that service which was designed to unite disciples in commemorating the dying work of their common Lord. On every occasion on which the Supper is celebrated, therefore,—and the implication is that it will not be infrequent (ver. 26)—there is incumbent on all who participate the duty of prior self-examination (ver. 28) that it may be entered upon in a spirit of Christian fellowship and affection towards the other participants, and of humble gratitude towards the Lord who gave Himself for us.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS (xii.-xiv.)

## CHAPTER XII

I Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

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After the questions of the women's veil and the Lord's supper have been disposed of, the next phase of public worship to claim Paul's attention was that involved in the exercise of spiritual gifts. Here, as there, there had been unseemliness and disorder. The services had not always tended to edification (xiv. 26, cf. xi. 17); all things had not been done with comeliness and order (xiv. 40). The reason was not far to seek. The mental and spiritual revolution which had been created by the new religion expressed itself, in the excitable Greek temperament, sometimes in vehement and impetuous ways, which were not to the general advantage (xii. 7). In their ecstasy, the new converts would ejaculate unintelligible sounds, "speak with tongues," as the curious phrase runs (cf. xiv. 13-16); sometimes two or three would speak at once (xiv. 27), and the edification which is the end of public worship, would be gravely imperilled. Again the great variety of "spiritual" gifts tended to create divisions between the members (xii. 25); a highly endowed brother would despise one of inferior gifts (xii. 21) while those of inconspicuous attainments might look upon themselves as useless, or be jealous of the others. The situation called for a wise word from Paul. Whether they had consulted him or not, we do not know—probably they had; but he clearly intends this discussion of spiritual gifts to form one of the great divisions of his letter (for  $\pi\epsilon\rho\imath\delta\epsilon$  at the beginning, cf. vii. 1, viii. 1).

*The Test of Possession by the Spirit of God (xii. 1-3).*

I. Now concerning spiritual gifts (rather than persons, xiv. 37) brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed : and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

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Knowledge on this point might very easily be obscure or confused. Spirit-possession was a frequent phenomenon in Jewish and heathen religion ; mighty words might be spoken and mighty works done by persons under certain spiritual influences : the question was, how could it be determined whether the spirit that inspired them was divine or diabolic ? Jesus' own works were attributed by the scribes to Beelzebub (Mark iii. 22). How were phenomena so similar to be distinguished ? This point Paul wishes to clear up for the Corinthians.

2, 3. You know—again the familiar appeal to their knowledge—that when you were heathen, you (were : apparently we have to supply *ητε* with *ἀπαγόμενοι*) led away to idols that, unlike the living God, had no voice, according as you might, on each occasion (impf. tense) happen to be led. There was a sharp breach between their former and their present life : then they were *heathen*, now they are Christian. The idols which they then worshipped and consulted were dumb (Ps. cxv. 7), the oracles given in their name were often obscure, useless, and contradictory, and the powers which were supposed to stand behind them were demonic, not divine. That is why I make known to you that no one speaking in the power and under the influence of the spirit of GOD says, “Cursed be Jesus,” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord,” unless in the holy spirit, that is, the spirit of God. The true test, then, of a man's possession by the spirit of God is his attitude to Jesus : here again we see how intimately, for Paul, Jesus is involved in the idea of God. It would hardly be in a Christian assembly that any one could cry out, “Jesus be anathema” ; this cry must have been heathen or Jewish. There were many ways in which the spirit was supposed to manifest itself—among others, in ecstatic, unintelligible speech ; the supreme test of

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

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true spirit-possession, however, was not this, but humble submission to the authority of Christ and intelligent confession of Him as Lord (cf. Mark ix. 38 f.).

*Spiritual Gifts Many and Varied, But One in Source and Purpose* (xii. 4-11).

4-7. The supreme test of spiritual possession has just been mentioned. **T**here are, however, divisions (rather than *differences* : cf. the participle in ver. 11) of spiritual endowments, but the same spirit; and there are divisions of ministrations, but the same Lord; and there are divisions of activities but the same God, inspiring all these activities in all the different types of Christians (vv. 4-6). The Trinitarian conception seems to shine through this statement, cf. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The endowments, the ministrations, and the activities, are the same thing conceived from different points of view. The endowments are *gifts* of the spirit, which take the form of *service* (of many kinds : plu.) prescribed by and rendered to the Lord (that is, Christ), and which are, from another point of view, expressions of an immanent divine *activity*. As it worked *in all*, even in the least gifted, there should be no room for jealousy; just as, even in the most gifted, there should be no room for pride, for it is *God* that worketh. **B**ut to each, to the least as well as to the greatest, is given continuously (pres.) the manifestation of the spirit, which expresses itself in some way through every Christian personality; but this manifestation is with a view to that which is profitable, not so much to the individual himself as to the whole body of which he is a member, the church (xiv. 12, 26). Great gifts are not to be a source of pride to their possessor, but of profit to the church.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit : to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ;

10 To another the working of miracles ; to another

**8-10.** Paul now proceeds to enumerate the ways in which the spirit manifests itself to the advantage of the church. **For to one through the spirit is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same spirit ; to a man of another type faith, moving in the sphere of and in the power of the same spirit, and to another gifts of healing of various kinds (*ἰαπάτων*, plu.) in and by means of the one spirit, and to another mighty miraculous activities, and to another prophecy, and to another power to distinguish the various spirits ; to a man of another type, various kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues (vv. 8-10).** These verses afford us a very interesting glimpse into the multifarious activity of the Corinthian church. The question may be raised whether there is any kind of order in this list. A similar list of spiritual endowments occurs in ver. 28 ; but that list, with its *first, second, third, then, then,* is clearly intended to suggest order of importance. Common to both lists is the placing of the "tongues" at the end, and there can be little doubt that that is significant of Paul's real opinion. The Corinthians made much of it ; Paul hints that its real place is last, not first. In deciding whether any deliberate order is observed in vv. 8-10, the presence of *ἐτέρῳ* (without δέ), twice in the midst of so many repetitions of *ἄλλῳ δέ* has to be taken into account. It is possible that the change was made simply for variety's sake ; but it is just as probable that it has a deeper meaning, especially when we note that each *ἐτέρῳ* (a man of another *kind*) does really introduce a group that differs perceptibly from the others. The case has been well put by Professor Findlay, 'The nine (gifts) thus fell into three divisions, of two, five, and two members respectively, with *λόγος, πίστις, γλῶσσαι* [speech, faith, tongues] for their titles, the first of

prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another *divers* kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues :

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which exhibits the Spirit working *through* the intelligence, the second *in distinction from* the intelligence, and the third *in supersession of* the intelligence," cf. xiii. 8. Considering the emphasis placed by Paul earlier in the epistle on Christian *wisdom*, it is natural to find it in the first place here. The distinction between *wisdom* and *knowledge* probably is that the former is insight into the deep purpose of God as embodied in Christ, the latter is the intellectual apprehension of this. Of a different type is the group in which *faith* predominates. As *faith* is indispensable, whatever be a man's religious type (cf. Heb. xi. 6) and is especially so regarded by Paul, it may seem strange to have it thus put in a category by itself : but the context makes it clear that the *faith* here intended is not that which justifies, but that which enables a man to do mighty things (cf. Mat. xvii. 20). It may take the specific form of power to *heal* disease, or it may be power of a broader and more general kind. In the sphere of speech, it works as *prophecy*. The New Testament prophet is one who could speak with enthusiasm, intelligence, and power, able to bring his truth mightily home to the conscience and to carry conviction to unbelievers (xiv. 24 f.). There were further, as we have seen (cf. v. 1-3), many kinds of spirit-possession ; and another of the gifts here mentioned was the *power to distinguish the different spirits*, whether their source was divine or demonic.

The last group includes *tongues* and their *interpretation*. Whatever may be the case in Acts ii., there is no reason to suppose that the reference here is to the power to speak in foreign languages. In xiv. 10 f. speaking with tongues is *compared* to speaking in a foreign language, and therefore must itself have been something different ; nor in the reference to the household of Cornelius (Acts x. 46) or the disciples at Ephesus (Acts xix. 6) is there any necessity for, or propriety in, such an interpretation. All the references to speaking with tongues in 1 Cor. xiv go to show that it was an ecstatic utterance of unintelligible sounds, which the speaker himself might (xiv. 5, 13) or might not be able to interpret (xiv. 13) :

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

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the *power to interpret the tongues* was a gift of the spirit. It has been suggested that the strange and unintelligible utterances to which men were moved under the influence of the new religion, may have been regarded as celestial speech: this view is perhaps supported by xiii. 1, "Though I speak with the tongues of angels." But to Paul so sensational a gift is fraught with much danger, and little profit, to the church, and twice he deliberately puts it last (vv. 10, 28).

11. The gifts, then, are many; but the spirit which they manifest (ver. 7) and by which they are inspired, is one and the same. This point, which has already been incidentally made in vv. 8, 9 (where the gifts are *through, in accordance with, in* the one spirit) is pointedly stated in the conclusion. In all these manifestations, it is the one and the same spirit that is active, dividing to each severally as He will. If all the gifts alike have one source, pride and jealousy alike are out of the question. The spirit distributes an appropriate gift to each, missing none: the spirit of the whole is bound to manifest itself in each member (ver. 7). He does this indeed as He will, but that does not mean capriciously: He respects the capacities of each, dealing with each *separately, privately* (*iδιq.*).

*The Church is a Body With Members* (xii. 12-31).

The one spirit with its many and varied manifestations suggests to Paul the idea of the body with its many members, and this thought he applies to the idea of the church, whose various members, like those of the body, should work in harmony, each contentedly in its place and contributing to the welfare of the whole.

12, 13. For, as the body is one, and has many members, and ALL the members of the body, many as they are, constitute ONE body, so also is—not, as

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized unto one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

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we should expect, *the church*, but—**Christ**, regarded as the personality whose life is in each and all of the members, and who therefore constitutes their unity. It takes all the members together to make the one body. **For**, as a matter of fact (*kai*), **ALL** of us were, in and under the influence of **ONE** spirit, baptized and thus incorporated into **ONE** body, whether **Jews or Greeks**, slaves or free men, and we were thus **ALL**, by our baptism—not, as some suppose, through the Lord's supper—made to drink of **ONE** spirit. The slave is a member, a limb, of this body, no less than the free man, the Greek no less than the Jew. Each member is *vitally* related to the whole, and therefore from this point of view—and this is the one of supreme importance—distinctions which may exist between the members (cf. ver. 28) simply do not count. Note the importance ascribed to baptism —its connection with the spirit, and its function as incorporating into the body of Christ.

**14-17. For indeed the body is not one member, but many.** All are necessary, the slaves, the feebly gifted; and the withdrawal of one would be the injury of all. **If**, for example, the foot should say, under the impression that it was a relatively unimportant member, “**Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,**” that nevertheless **does not keep it from being a member of the body.** This is more in accordance with the grammar (*οὐ*, not *μή*), than to take these words as a question. Similarly, if the ear, in a petulant and jealous mood, should say, “**Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,**” that **does not keep it from being a member of the body** (ver. 16). Whatever these members may say, they do belong to the body, and they are indispensable to its completeness. A man must be able to handle and see, but

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ?

17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing ? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling ?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body ?

20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have

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he needs also to be able to walk and to hear : consequently any discontentment with our gifts or our function is out of place ; it may be humble, but it is necessary. The church, like the human body, needs in her members number and variety : whether in the church or in the body, if all had the same function, the result would be a useless monstrosity. **If the body were altogether eye, where would the hearing be ? If altogether hearing, where would the smelling be ?** (ver. 17). A glance at this hideous picture of a body which was all eye or all ear, shows how earnest Paul is to teach that *all* the members are necessary. That is the divine order of things (*ὅ Θεὸς ἔθετο*, ver. 18).

**18-20.** **But, as it is,** God has, in accordance with His “original and primal constitution of things” (Ellicott : aor. *ἔθετο*), set the members, not simply a few of unique importance, but **EVERY SINGLE ONE** of them, in the body, as He wished—not capriciously but with separate regard to the particular function each had to fulfil (ver. 11). **Now if they were all one member, where would the body be ?** One member cannot make a body. **But, as it is, there are many members, but one body.** Variety is indispensable ; but it is controlled and co-ordinated by a unity.

**21-24.** For men of inconspicuous gifts, the argument just led must have had the effect of a consolation ; now it turns, by

no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary :

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour ; and our *uncomely* parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need : but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked :

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implication, to men of more striking gifts, and rebukes their pride. **The eye**, one of the most marvellous and noble organs of the body, might, for example, be tempted to despise some other organ, but it cannot. It **cannot say**, for instance, to **the hand**, “**I don’t need you**,” nor again can **the head**, splendid and commanding as it is, say to **the feet**, “**I don’t need you**.” The work of the body cannot be done by eye and head alone ; without hands and feet how impotent would it be. For one member of the body to say to another, *I have no need of thee*, would be foolish, inasmuch as no member has any *independent* life of its own : its only meaning and value are in a body, and that body is served by *all* its members. So must it be in the church : each needs every other. Nay, but much rather **the seemingly feebler members of the body**—whether he means such organs as the heart and lungs, or the organs alluded to by *τὰ ἀσχήματα* in ver. 23, it is impossible to say—**are necessary** (ver. 22). What an inspiration to the weak member to learn that he is not only tolerated, but *necessary* ! and what a rebuke to the strong to be reminded that, as in the body so in the church, the weaker member is not only not to be despised, but is worthy of special attention and honour ! And **the members of the body** which we fancy to be relatively less honourable, we invest with more abundant honour by amply clothing them, and our *uncomely* private **members** similarly enjoy by clothing, a more abundant comeliness, while our comely **members**

25 That there should be no schism in the body ; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

**have no need** (ver. 24). Possibly all these adjectives describe the same organs under different points of view, as being necessary, less honourable, and uncomely. *ἀσχήμονα* is well illustrated by *ἀσχημοσύνη* (*shame*) in Rev. xvi. 15.

**24-27.** Strictly speaking, every member of the body, as it fulfils a necessary function (ver. 22) is honourable, and the epithets *uncomely* and *unhonoured* are misnomers ; for the whole body is a wonderful harmony created by God Himself. Nay, but God tempered the whole body together, giving to the member that suffered lack an honour that was more abundant (in the sense explained in ver. 23), that there should be no division (*schism*) in the body, but rather that the members should continually (pres., not aorist) exercise the same care over one another (vv. 24, 25). The word *schism* (ver. 25) is, in a sense, the key to the whole chapter. The Corinthians were by instinct, too, prone to schism (i. 10), it entered into their communion service (xi. 18), it was even fostered by the very gifts which should have benefited the church (xii. 7). The effect within the church was the same as would have been that within the body had the eye despised the hand, or the foot, in mistaken humility, refused to do its work. *The members must* so intimately and completely *care for one another* that any experience of any member must be instantly and inwardly shared by every other. *And if one member suffers, all the other members* must do more than sympathize : this is the English word that transliterates the Greek word used here—*συνπάσχει*, but the passage helps us to feel how far our *sympathy* has travelled from its original meaning. Now it is little more than a sort of external commiseration : the meaning here is that the other members not merely

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

are sorry for, but actually suffer with the afflicted member. This is true enough of the physical organism—a pain in one part may cause the whole body to writhe—but how rare is such sympathy in human fellowship; and just as rare, if not more rare, is the other, where, if one member is honoured, all the other members not merely offer congratulations, but actually rejoice with the recipient of the honour. These statements of sympathy between the members refer, of course, primarily to the body; but Paul is thinking of that other body, whose schism-loving members still so little understand their function. Now YE (*ὑμεῖς*, emphatic) are the body of Christ and members, each with his allotted part.

28. The special parts allotted to the various members are now described in order of importance; and this allotment, like that of the members of the physical body (ver. 18) is divinely ordained (*ἐθέτο* in both cases). And some—probably Paul meant to continue with *and others*, but he changes the construction to *first, second, etc.*—God appointed in the church for its profit (ver. 7) first apostles, though in another sense, judging by their sorrowful careers, it seemed as if God had appointed them to be last (iv. 9). The *apostles*, here used not in its general sense of envoys, but in its highest sense, come first as “the witnesses of the living Christ, and the founders of churches” (Massie), cf. ix. 1, 2 for some of the qualifications of an apostle. Second, prophets (cf. ver. 10) who proclaimed the truth in an inspiring and enthusiastic way, in distinction to third, teachers who temperately developed the truth rather in a way that appealed to the intellect. Then follows a series of offices described in abstract terms, suggesting that these gifts were not yet so definitely associated with particular persons as the three already mentioned. Miraculous powers, then, gifts of healing (plu.: cf. ver. 9) helps of a more general kind (in Acts xx. 35, the corresponding verb *ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι* is used of helping the sick, and brought into connection with the word of Jesus that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”), governments, skill in

29 *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?*

30 *Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?*

31 *But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

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directing or *piloting* the church, a skill which later crystallized into the office of elder or bishop, just as the “helps” may have been the prototypes of the deacons; and last here, as in the previous list (ver. 10) **kinds of tongues**.

29-31a. Paul concludes: *all* these gifts and types are necessary. One member does not make a body (ver. 19), nor does one type of spiritual gift make a church: in it the apostles find their place, so also those who speak with tongues, humble though their gift may be. The following rhetorical questions are, as is natural enough, not an exact repetition of the gifts just mentioned. **Are ALL apostles? are ALL prophets? are ALL teachers? are ALL miracle-workers?** (or less probably, *have* all miraculous powers, reading the following *ἐχοντων* back), **have ALL gifts of healing? do ALL speak with tongues? do ALL interpret?** *All* these types are necessary; yet he has just hinted in his *first, second, etc.*, that they are not all of *equal* importance. Some are greater than others—teaching, for example, greater than tongues (cf. xiv. 19, 23); therefore he advises them to **covet** steadily and continuously (*pres. imper.*) **the GREATER gifts**. The fact that God has assigned every member his place with regard to his capacity (cf. ver. 18) is not meant to be a curb upon aspiration.

The modern church must differ widely from the church of Corinth: we have little that corresponds to gifts of healing, and nothing to the gifts of tongues. Yet there are great principles dominating the discussion in this chapter, whose applicability to the church of Christ will never be exhausted. The conception of the church as a body with members is apprehended only very remotely in theory, and hardly at all in practice, by the average Christian church. The technical sense of the phrase *church member* has blinded us to the fact that one who bears this name

ought to be a *limb* of his church ; without the service which he is fitted to render, the church is incomplete. Every member ought to perform his function—otherwise he impoverishes the life of the church—and his function is determined by his capacity. This obligation rests upon *every* member ; Paul suggestively says, “Those which seem relatively feeble, are *necessary*.” This ought to be at once a consolation and an inspiration to those of slender gifts. The church needs and can assimilate every variety, and every contribution tells.

And just as the mistaken humility of those who are less gifted is injurious to the church, still more is the pride of those who are more gifted. The most fatal *schism* (ver. 25) that can be introduced into any church is created by the spirit which says, “I have no need of thee.” To begin with, that is not true. Each needs every other, and “the weak are necessary.” But, apart from that, the really Christian question is not whether I have need of others, but whether they have need of me. The gifts of the mind and spirit are given, not to be selfishly hoarded, but to be used to the *advantage of the church* (ver. 7). There is room and need in the church for the best that we have and know and can do. But penetrating the various activities of all her sons, should be manifest their unity of spirit.

It is not without interest that Paul puts the speaking with tongues last : he does so twice, and we must suppose that he does so deliberately. This was the most sensational gift—probably the Corinthians were particularly proud of it (it has the first place in xiii. 1), and some of them may have hardly considered a person a Christian who did not possess it—but the proper place for it is at the bottom. It was as a rule more exciting and confusing than edifying, and it was a long remove from prophecy and teaching. The significance of this for the modern church is obvious.

#### *The Hymn in Praise of Love* (xiii.).

This wonderful hymn in praise of love has for its background the disorder of the Corinthian church. It was a gifted church, but gifts without love are nothing. This is the truth that Paul wishes to bring home to its members, torn as they were with the spirit of jealousy, pride, and schism (xiv. 25) ; but, as so often elsewhere in his writings (cf. Rom. viii. 51 ff.) he is lifted by a turn of his argument, or by a sudden emotion of his heart, into

## CHAPTER XIII

I THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

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a higher and serener sphere, and out of the depths there rises a strain of the purest poetry, in which controversy and admonition are alike forgotten, and we are permitted to gaze, with undistracted eye, upon the beautiful vision that filled his soul.

xii. 31b. The eulogy of love is introduced by a statement : and besides the exhortation I have just given you to *covet the greater gifts*, I point out to you a way of exceeding excellence. The *love*, upon which the chapter insists, is not here regarded as a gift, more excellent than the gifts he has just enumerated, and some of which he has by implication specially recommended (xii. 28-31) ; it is a *way*, in which these gifts are to be exercised. .

xiii. 1. Yet the apostle does not at once describe the way itself : he begins by showing its indefeasible necessity. If I speak with the tongues of men, yes, even of angels, and have not LOVE, I am become for the want of love a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. The *tongues of men* have sometimes been interpreted as foreign languages ; but it is better to preserve the meaning which the phrase undoubtedly has in xii. and xiv. of ecstatic, unintelligible utterances to which the speakers were impelled under the influence of the spirit. The speech of angels in paradise, as a stage beyond the ecstatic speech of men, would naturally also be unintelligible to mortal men (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 4) under normal conditions (cf. note on xii. 10) ; but the power to speak thus ecstatically was apparently regarded by the sensation-loving Corinthians as the noblest endowment of the spirit, and therefore perhaps put here first by Paul. But, if the man thus gifted be destitute of *love*—the word is sprung suddenly and with great effect upon the reader, fresh from the discussion of the gifts in ch. xii. where it is not mentioned—he is no better than a soulless brass instrument, that gives forth loud, confused, and senseless sounds when it is beaten. Here, as in xii. 10, 28, we see Paul's real opinion of the tongues ; though he had the gift himself (xiv. 18) he did not

2 And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

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think it of much importance, and the words of xiii. 1 look like a criticism of its essential inanity, at least unless the tongues were interpreted in love (xiv. 5). With his usual courtesy (cf. xi. 32) Paul assumes the case of deficiency in love to be his own.

**2, 3. And if I have prophecy**, that inspiration which enables a man to present Christian truth with authority and enthusiasm (cf. xii. 10), **and if**, in addition, I know the **mysteries** of the Christian revelation, **every one of them** (*πάντα*, emphatic), **and if** I have all the (*τὴν*) range of knowledge—if, that is, besides being a powerful and gifted speaker, I have not merely an intuition of Christian truth, but a well-articulated apprehension of it—; yes, **and if I have all the** wonder-working **faith** spoken of by Jesus (Mat. xvii. 20, xxi. 21) **so as to remove mountains**, not one or once for all (aorist), but one after the other (present, *μεθιστάνειν* : mighty faith in repeated operation) : if I have prophecy, knowledge, and faith, **and have not LOVE, I am nothing**—not little, but *nothing*. He may accomplish much, but he *is* nothing (Mat. vii. 22, 23). Besides men with the gifts of prophecy and faith, there were also in the church of Corinth “helps” (xii. 28) : among these may have been some who, in a loveless fashion, gave doles to the poor. **And if I dole out** (as in morsels or crumbs) **all my substance** to the needy, **and if I even go further**, abandoning not property, but life itself, and **give up my body to be burned** like the three Hebrew children (Dan. iii. 19 f.), **and have not LOVE, I am not a whit benefited**. Whatever he may have hoped to gain by his loveless sacrifice, he actually gains nothing. An interesting alternative reading to *κανθήσομαι* (or *ωμαι*) is *κανχήσωμαι*, *that I may boast* ; but boasting, as the definite aim of sacrifice, seems rather inappropriate here, and the phrase *to give up my body* needs amplification, though it

4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

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might be defended by *παρεδίδετο* in xi. 23. Without love, whatever gifts a man has or sacrifices he makes, he is nothing and gains nothing. But what is love ?

In 4-7 Paul defines love by showing positively how it behaves, and negatively, how it does not behave. Negatively love is slow to anger, of patient temper ; positively, she is kind. The negative aspect is developed at length. Love is not envious or jealous of others whose gifts are more brilliant ; such envy is unlovely, though there is another envy (not of persons, but of things) which is commendable (xii. 31). Love does not play the braggart, is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly, commits no breach of moral propriety, does not selfishly seek the things that are her own, but considers, like Paul himself (x. 33), the good of others ; and, as she has no selfish interests to serve, she does not let herself be provoked. She is often injured, but she takes no account of the (*τὸ*) wrong done her, all these negative statements are excellently summarized in the sentence, she has no joy in iniquity—the sight of wrong, whatever be its nature, vexes her—but she rejoices with the truth—truth in general, in particular Christian truth, here personified. When the truth is triumphant, love is glad. The four brief sentences stating positively what love does, are splendidly comprehensive, each beginning with an emphatic *πάντα*. ALL things she bears (rather than covers) in the sense of tolerates, ALL things she believes, ALL things she hopes, ALL things she endures : there is nothing which she will not bear, believe, hope, endure. Her life is a struggle against hostile influences, but love is ever true to her nature : with everything to dis-

8 Charity never faileth ; but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail : whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease ; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

appoint her, she will believe and hope the best and endure the most : love is that which inspires tolerance, *faith* (in man), *hope*, and endurance. The rhythmical nature of these sentences lifts them to the dignity of a prose poem, to which the absence of connecting particles, and the repetition of  $\eta\ \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  in ver. 4 and of  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$  in ver. 7 adds a certain solemnity.

**8-10.** Verses 8-13 describe, in similarly rhythmical terms, the abiding nature of love. **Love never at any time falls**, “but ever remains steadfast, unshaken and unmoved, abiding for ever” (Theod.) ; and in this she offers a striking contrast to the gifts, so often already alluded to, of *prophecy*, *tongues*, and *knowledge*, which, however they may edify the church, are only temporary. **But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away ; or tongues, they shall stop ; or knowledge, it shall be done away** ; for the reason that our knowledge is but partial, and our prophecy is partial—significantly enough, the tongues are omitted—but when the perfect is come, the partial shall be done away. Paul is apparently referring to the coming of Christ, the great hope of the church, when aspiration would be fulfilled. That coming ushered in the perfect age, and everything preparatory to it was necessarily partial and incomplete. Prophecy was only valid until then ; and our present knowledge would give place to perfect knowledge (ver. 12).

**11, 12.** Paul illustrates the temporary nature of these gifts of the church by the analogy of childhood : when that age is surmounted, its interests and activities are transcended. **When**

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

I was a child, my speech was a child's (there is here just the suspicion of an allusion to the speaking with tongues), my mind was a child's, my reasoning a child's; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the things of the child, and for me they are permanently abolished (*κατήργηκα*, perf.). So the church, in the present age, is in its minority, and its gifts are suitable to its condition ; but, in the age to come, she will have attained, and the ways and the helps of her childhood will be left for ever behind. There is a great contrast between the *now*, with its partial states, and the *then* with its perfection (ver. 10). For NOW we see through (or by means of) a mirror, the metallic mirror of the ancients, which did not reflect well ; this fact illustrates the *εν αἰρτύματι*, in a riddle, probably *in a baffling way*, without clearness or sharpness of outline : the phrase is almost certainly suggested by the description of Moses in Num. xii. 8 where the Septuagint uses the same word (A.V. "in dark speeches"). The "seeing" referred to is, as the context suggests, more particularly the vision of God. But THEN, when Christ comes, our face will be turned directly to God's face, and our knowledge of Him will be immediate, which is impossible now : for now my knowledge is gradual (-*σκω*) and partial, but then I shall know God well, even as I was also well known of Him, on the ever-memorable day of my conversion to Christ (cf. viii. 3).

13. The difference between the partial and the perfect has been amply illustrated by the figures of the child and the mirror. Certain things pass—tongues, prophecy, etc. : but, as it is, there ABIDES—not merely in this world, but for ever—faith, hope, love, THESE three (cf. 1 Thes. i. 3) not the other three (prophecy, tongues, knowledge, ver. 8). Faith and hope seem more appropriate to this world, but they, too, share the abiding destiny of love : faith as trust in God, and hope as

## CHAPTER XIV

1 FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God : for no man

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expectancy of blessedness to come. But the greatest of these is **love**, because love is the ground and inspiration of the other two, love *believeth* and *hopeth* (ver. 7).

The lesson enforced with such beauty and eloquence throughout this chapter is one which the church and the individual need to be ever learning "by heart"—that endowments and service uninspired by love have no moral value ; that however eloquent, learned, or charitable a man may be, if love be not the soul of his action, he is a moral *nonentity* (ver. 2) ; that, without love, he has no part in the eternal order.

*Prophecy Better Than Speaking With Tongues* (xiv. 1-25).

The discussion of spiritual endowments which was interrupted, or rather illuminated, by the beautiful panegyric on love, is here resumed, and the hint in xii. 28, that the endowments vary in importance, is here developed, with special reference to the gifts of prophecy and speaking with tongues. The chapter gives us a glimpse into a Corinthian service of public worship, which was so very different from our own. The point upon which Paul strenuously insists throughout this paragraph is that, as its general aim is the edification of the church, its various parts have value according as they contribute to that aim. Prophecy is, from this point of view, more valuable than speaking with tongues, as it contributes more.

1-3. The chapter links simply and naturally with the last. **Pursue love**—the love described in ch. xiii. This is not a separate gift, but the spirit in which all the various gifts of the church members are to be exercised. *Pursue*—a far more earnest word than simply "follow after" (cf. Ps. xxiii. 6). This pursuit of love did not supersede the necessity for the gifts, for Paul says again, as he had said before (xii. 31) that

understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

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these were to be coveted—in a good sense, of course: for, in the bad sense, *love does not covet* (xiii. 4)—but at the same time **covet the spiritual (gifts)**, all the gifts mentioned in xii. 8–10, **but more than any other, that ye may prophesy**: he does not mean, “covet spiritual gifts in order that you may prophesy,” but “covet most of all the gift of prophecy.” This emphasis on prophecy at the very beginning of the discussion, is striking, and significant of Paul’s high estimate of it: it prepares us to gather all the hints that the chapter offers as to the nature of New Testament prophecy. In point of fact, throughout the discussion, the only other spiritual gift with which prophecy is compared and contrasted is the gift of tongues. The reason for the injunction to covet prophecy most of all, especially more than tongues, is at once given: **For he that speaks with a tongue does not speak to men—for nobody understands (lit. hears) him—but to God**: if nobody understands him, then obviously he has no power directly to edify the congregation; **but in spirit only, and without the participation of his understanding (cf. vv. 14, 15) he speaks mysteries**, which may, indeed, subsequently be interpreted by himself (ver. 5) or by some one else (ver. 28) but which, till they are interpreted, are unintelligible, and therefore useless to the church. **But**, while the tongues are unedifying, **he who exercises the prophetic gift speaks to men**—and therefore has a real place in public worship—**edification**: his speech is not merely sound (vv. 7, 8), it *builds* the hearers *up*. Besides edification, his discourse is also **exhortation and consolation**. As, in the sequel, only edification is mentioned (vv. 12, 26), possibly these two words are intended only to define it more closely: by the prophet’s speech, the remiss are shaken up, and the sorrowful comforted, and thus the church is edified.

4, 5. Throughout, Paul is careful not to deprecate the

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

tongues unduly, cf. ver. 18, where he thanks God for them (cf. ver. 5); and he here concedes that **he that speaks with a tongue edifies**—not of course the church, to which his words are unintelligible—but **himself**, even though they may not be wholly intelligible to himself; for he feels that it is under the influence of the spirit that he is moved to utterance. **But he who exercises the prophetic gift**, seeing he speaks intelligibly, **edifies (the) whole church**. His gift is less ostentatious, but more useful, and therefore *more to be coveted* (ver. 1). So far is Paul from depreciating tongues that he goes on: **Now I wish you spoke, every one of you, with tongues**: but I wish still more that you prophesied. (*īva* is not here “in order that,” but *practically* equal to preceding infin.) Besides, **he that exercises the gift of a prophet is a greater**, because more serviceable person, than **he who speaks with tongues, unless**, as a matter of fact (*ei* with subj., not *īav*), **he interpret, in order that the church may get edification**. The church meets to be edified, she is not edified by speakers who are unintelligible; the unintelligible speech, to be edifying, will have to be interpreted. (*ēktos ei μή* is a pleonastic combination of *ēktos ei*, *except if*, and *ei μή*, *unless*.)

6. The truth that unintelligible speech is of no use to the church, Paul brings home by a pointed illustration. **And now, brethren.** It is not quite clear whether *now* is logical or temporal: either (a) this being so, edification being impossible without interpretation, or (b) now, in view of your present difficulties: probably (a) is to be preferred. In either case, a visit from Paul would be of little use, unless he said something they could understand. **If I come to you speak-**

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

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ing with tongues, what good shall I do you, unless I speak to you either in the way of a revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? A *revelation* would be a divine communication which he would impart in *prophetic* form; *knowledge* would be the intellectual apprehension of it, which he would impart by way of *teaching*. Teaching or prophecy, but no tongues—they would help a perplexed people little.

7-9. In a series of highly significant illustrations (vv. 7-11), Paul shows the futility of uninterpreted tongues as only so much sound without sense. Inanimate things—pipe or harp, for example—if, in giving forth voice they yet give no distinction to the notes, make no clear distinction between one note and another, how shall the tune be known that is being played on the pipe or the harp? The result will be bewilderment and confusion—a tune which is no tune. Or for further illustration, pass from the music of peace to that of war: if the voice that the trumpet gives forth is not clear, who will get ready for battle? No real stimulus, no informed action, can come from unintelligible sounds. Your case is exactly the same: if by means of the tongue, your instrument of sound, you give forth a word which has no clear significance, how shall there be any knowledge of what is spoken? for you will be in the condition of people speaking (*ερεθε* with partic.) *not to men* (ver. 2), but *into (the) air*—an idle enough exercise, and profitless withal.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown tongue* pray that he may interpret.

**10-12.** From confused playing upon musical instruments, he passes to the seemingly confused sounds of foreign languages. **T**here are ever so many kinds of voices, clearly here equal to *languages*, mayhap, in the world: *φωναὶ* is apparently preferred to *γλῶσσαι*, because of the ambiguity of the latter in this connection: **a**nd **n**one of them **i**s **w**ithout **v**oice, *i.e.* significance—languages have a *voice*, a meaning, for those who habitually speak and hear them. **W**ell, then, if I do not know the *force* (*δύναμιν*), that is, the significance of the voice, I shall be a barbarian to the speaker, while the speaker, in his turn, will be a barbarian, in his relation to me (*ἐν ἐμοὶ*, *in my case*, rather than *in my judgment*). **Y**our case is exactly the same (*οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς* in ver. 12 is an echo of ver. 9; cf. *πῶς γνωσθήσεται* in vv. 7, 9). If you speak unintelligibly, you will be as barbarians within the church, whereas it is your duty to edify it. Therefore, since ye are coveters (cf. ver. 1) of spirits, spiritual gifts and forces—perhaps they had made this claim in their letter—seek them with a view to the edification of the church, in order that ye may abound in them. The order suggests that this translation is more correct than *seek that ye may abound to the edification of the church*, though the latter is not impossible.

**13, 14.** Therefore, since tongues, uninterpreted, contribute nothing to edification, let him that speaks with a tongue pray that he may interpret (*ἴρα* being a blend of purpose and purport, and carrying, in such a context, the same am-

14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned

biguity as the English *that*). Some suppose that *pray* here must be interpreted by “*pray with tongues*” of the next verse, and is not merely an ordinary prayer for the gift of interpretation. So Alford, who translates: “wherefore let him who speaketh with a tongue, in his prayer (or, when praying), strive that he may interpret.” Still there is no absolute necessity why prayer in ver. 13 should mean precisely the same thing as in ver. 14; and, in the context, the more natural explanation of the words would be this; considering the indefeasible importance of intelligible speech, if the church is to be edified, any one who has the gift of tongues, should pray for the power of interpreting them. **For if I**—with his usual tact, he makes the case his own (cf. xiii. 1): *you* would have been less courteous and skilful—**pray in an** ecstatic, unintelligible tongue, my spirit indeed prays—it is a real prayer—but my intelligence is unfruitful, because it *yields* nothing for the edification of others. Fervour, if it is to be practically helpful to the church, must be guided by intelligence: there must be *mind* in it.

**15-17. How then does the case stand?** It stands thus; that, in public worship, *both* spirit and mind, fervour and intelligence, are necessary. **I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the intelligence also;** **I will sing praise** ( $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\nu$ , originally of the instrumental accompaniment, then of the song itself) **with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the intelligence also.** Apparently *prayer* and *praise* were the two directions in which speaking with tongues chiefly manifested itself. The use of the intelligence is absolutely incumbent upon those who take any leading part in public worship: **for, if you**—the effect of the argument is heightened

say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice*

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by this direct, personal appeal—bless God, offer your prayer or song of thanksgiving to Him, *in spirit only*, and without the application of your intelligence, think of the man who fills the place of the uninitiated (*ὁ ἀναπληρῶν* comes early in the sentence, in advance of *πᾶς*). By *ἰδιώτης*, strictly a private person, or a man with only lay and not expert knowledge, we are apparently here to understand a Christian who has no experience of tongues and no power to interpret them. The word *place* (*τόπος*) has been pressed so as to suggest that certain seats were reserved for these people in the church assemblies ; more probably it is the figurative, not the literal sense, that is here meant—*position*. This *ἰδιώτης*, as a Christian, has to be considered, he comes to be edified : but how is he to say the customary Amen, which follows a public prayer (Neh. viii. 6, cf. Rev. v. 14), at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? There is something almost humorously drastic about the question. The *Amen* has no meaning, unless the prayer has been intelligently followed ; and that in the case assumed is impossible, as the prayer was dictated by spirit only, without the active exercise of intelligence. For, so far as you are concerned (*σὺ μὲν*), your thanksgiving is all very well, but, when the church meets, you are not the only person to consider : there is the other man as well, and he is not edified. What you do is *καλόν*, unobjectionable, even *good*, but not edifying, and the church meets for edification.

18-20. Again and again the argument has seemed to tend towards an absolute depreciation of the gift of tongues, but it is not so : Paul has the gift himself, and thanks God for it. I thank God, I speak with tongues more than all

I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown tongue*.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

of you; here we get a glimpse of the powerfully ecstatic element in the nature of Paul. But, though a man may speak to God (ver. 2) in tongues, as he is moved, they are of no use in the church: *there*, says Paul, I would rather speak five words with my intelligence, that I might instruct others also—the *others* are always in Paul's mind (cf. ver. 17)—than ten thousand words in a tongue. Speaking in the church should be governed by the desire, not to create a sensation, but to produce an effect, an *instructive* effect; rather a sentence that helps, than an oration that merely excites. This confession shows us the splendid balance of Paul. He had a deeply ecstatic element in his nature, and ecstatic experiences are acknowledged in 2 Cor. v. 13, xii. 1-4; but he was well aware that the active exercise of intelligence was the higher manifestation of the spirit, and this was one of his invaluable contributions to religion. He set himself resolutely against the contemporary tendency to identify the spirit with the extraordinary, the violent, the abnormal, and proclaimed that its noblest manifestation was in the ordinary and normal exercise of intelligent powers—not as a wonder-working, but rather as an ethicizing force (cf. Gal. v. 22). The Corinthian passion for the ostentatious in spiritual things he gently (*ἀδελφοί, brethren*, ver. 20) but deliberately characterizes as childish. Brethren, do not show yourselves children in mind, but—if you are to be children, let it be in another sphere—in wickedness be as babies; in mind, however, show yourselves full-grown (cf. ii. 6, iii. 1), by preferring, like the wise men they claimed to be, intelligence in worship to unintelligible and unedifying fervour.

Another aspect of the question is briefly discussed in vv. 21-25, namely, the *effect* of tongues and prophecy upon those who stand without the pale of Christianity, whether as unacquainted with it or hostile to it: here again the superiority of prophecy to tongues is demonstrated.

21 In the law it is written, With *men* of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and

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21. In the law, that is, in the Old Testament (Isaiah xxviii. 11, 12), it stands written: "Surely in men of strange tongue and in lips of strangers will I speak to this people, and not even so will they give heed unto me, saith the Lord." The term *the law*, primarily the Pentateuch, came to be applied to the whole of the Old Testament: in John x. 34, it is used of Ps. lxxxii. 6. In Isaiah there is, of course, no reference to such speaking with tongues as was practised in Corinth. The prophet's contemporaries scoffingly rejected his instruction, which seemed to them puerile; and he warns them that the next divine message would come to them from Assyrian lips—the conquerors with their foreign speech would be upon them, though even so terrible an experience would not bring the frivolous Israelites to listen to their God.

22-25. And so—this is the inference—the tongues are for a sign not to those who believe, but to the unbelievers, not apparently a sign which would induce them to repent and be saved, but one which would confirm them still more in their obstinacy or indifference; for *will they not say that you are mad* (ver. 23), just as Israel *would not hearken* (Is. xxviii. 12). The citation has the value only of illustration, not of proof: there is, of course, in Isaiah, no *prophecy* of the Corinthian situation. Tongues are, then, in this sense, an ominous sign to unbelievers, while prophecy, on the other hand, is not for the unbelievers, but for those who believe. If then the whole church assembles together, and all talk unceasingly (pres.) with tongues, and persons should come in to the meeting who are either without

there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all :

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest ; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

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knowledge (of Christianity) or positively unbelieving, what will the effect be? will they not say that you are mad? If speaking with tongues were the only public religious exercise, not only would the conversion of outsiders be impossible, but they would suppose that they had stumbled into a lunatic asylum. On the other hand, if all prophesy, and one comes in to the meeting, an unbeliever even or one simply without knowledge (of Christianity), the effect is far-reaching, a conviction is produced which may end in conversion : he is convicted (cf. John xvi. 8) by all—every fresh speaker distresses his conscience anew, and deepens his sense of guilt—he is sifted by all, every new speech brings him before an inner tribunal, the secrets of his heart grow manifest, as the search-light is flashed upon them by the divinely illuminated speakers : and so, under the overwhelming impression of the presence of God produced by these inspired and searching speeches, he, even though an *unbeliever* before, will humbly fall upon his face prostrate, and worship God, declaring, in that act and afterwards by speech, that God is among you in reality: such impressions can have only one source. This description of the effect of prophecy is not strictly consistent with ver. 22 where it is a sign to the believing : it supplements that statement, by insisting upon its power not only to edify the believing, but to search, convict, and convert the unbeliever, here (unlike ver. 23) mentioned before the *iδιώτης*, as its effect upon him is more wonderful.

These last verses give a very welcome description of the nature of prophecy in the early church. It does not seem to

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

have differed essentially from preaching upon its higher levels. It is a mode of speech governed by intelligence, and addressing itself to intelligence; but still more than to the mind was its appeal to the conscience, which it searched and convicted so powerfully that God Himself was felt to be behind it. Its result or at least its aim was the conversion of unbelievers and the edification of the church assembled.

Very different was the speaking with tongues. This chapter puts it beyond all possible doubt that this speech had nothing whatever to do with foreign languages. It is *compared* to foreign speech (vv. 10, 11) in its unintelligibility to those who have no means of interpreting it: it must therefore have been a different thing. It produced the same kind of effect as a tune incoherently played upon a musical instrument: it was noisy, but, for the uninitiated, senseless, and those who spoke it would seem to an outsider to be behaving like madmen. What a curious light the passage throws upon ancient Christian worship! The prominence given to the discussion of tongues shows that the phenomenon was by no means infrequent; and it was a singular Providence that so sane a thinker as Paul appeared to direct the exuberant emotion and activity of the church into more profitable channels.

*Directions for the Conduct of Public Worship* (xiv. 26-36).

The general principle has already been suggested that *edification* is to be the criterion of the value of spiritual gifts, and the supreme end of their exercise in the church assembly. This principle is now applied more particularly, and takes the form of specific injunction.

**26. How does the case stand, then, brethren?** (cf. v. 15). Every time you assemble (pres., different from *συνέλθη*, aor., in ver. 23) every member has a distinct contribution to make: each one has a psalm, perhaps from the Old Testament (interpreted of course in the Christian sense), or just as

27 If any man speak in an *unknown tongue*, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

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probably a hymn composed under the new inspiration created by Christianity, such as those in Luke i., ii., and scattered throughout the book of Revelation. Praise "with tongues" (cf. ver. 15) is not here contemplated, as the tongues are mentioned afterwards. Another man has a teaching, instruction, but hardly yet *dogmatic* teaching (ver. 6); another has a revelation, a divine communication, which he will set forth prophetically (ver. 6); another has a tongue, offers prayer or praise ecstatically, another has interpretation (cf. xii. 8-10, 28-31), and so can edify the church by explaining these strange utterances. The emphatic repetition of the *εχει* suggestively illustrates the individuality of the gifts; each man has something to contribute, and the assembled church has at her disposal a great variety of spiritual gifts. The question naturally arises: how are they to be utilized, and in what spirit? The answer is illuminating: **Let all things be carried on with a view to edification.** This principle affords the practical solution of all the problems that may arise. It will decide, for example, that an utterance with tongues, for which there is no interpreter, will be repressed; it will decide how many prophets should be allowed to speak at one service; it will impose silence upon a speaker, when a new revelation has been made to some other member.

**27-29.** The principle of edification is applied in detail. First, not in importance, but in immediate interest to the Corinthians, is ecstatic utterance; in the case of speaking with tongues, let it be to the number of two, or at most three—at one meeting, of course—and by turn, not all at one time; as we may reasonably infer from this injunction the Corinthians had occasionally, if not frequently, done; another glimpse into the

30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

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tumultuous nature of their worship, and the need for regulating it. **And**, as interpretation is indispensable for edification, **let one**, but not more than one, interpret: should there be no interpreter, **however**, either in the person of the speaker himself (ver. 5) or of any other, let him who speaks with tongues **keep silence** (pres.) in (the) church (*i.e.* the assembly, not the building), and, as he cannot speak edifyingly *to men* (ver. 2), **let him speak to himself and to God**. That will practically mean *at home* or in *private*; for  $\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\bar{\iota}\nu$  could hardly be used of inaudible speech to himself in the public assembly. There is no real place for unintelligible speech in the church. **In the case of prophets** who, in spite of the many spiritual gifts represented in the church (ver. 26) divide the interest, throughout this discussion, with the ecstatic speakers, **let two or three speak** in the course of a service, and **let the others**, who have the gift of discriminating the spirits (ver. 10) discriminate, and decide whether these prophetic utterances really have their source in God.

30-33. If, however, while a prophet is speaking, **a revelation be made to another who is sitting by** (the speaker stands, the people sit), **let the first keep silence**, bring his speech to a close in deference to the new revelation. This shows that the injunctions here laid down are elastic, not mechanical. How the presence of a new message in the assembly might be indicated, we are not told; but it is significant that the speaker, inspired though he is conceived to be, has in such a case to stop, and resume his seat. It might be urged that it was simply impossible for an eager, earnest prophet, thus to repress himself at a moment's notice. Not so, says Paul: **for you have ALL the power to prophesy**,

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches ; for it is not permitted unto them to speak ; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask

if you do so **one by one**—and if due self-restraint is exercised, even assuming that they all possessed the prophetic gift (ver. 24), they would thus all in course of time have the opportunity —in order that in this way **ALL** the members of the church may learn, and **ALL** be stimulated : if *all* such gifts are exercised, *all* the members will be spiritually furthered. **And** this self-repression is perfectly possible, for (**the**) spirits of prophets are subject to (**the**) prophets in whom they reside : a prophet is an *intelligent* person, he has *νοῦς*, and ought to be able to master his emotion : he must not be the victim of his own fervid eloquence, but must promptly and willingly give place to another inspired speaker, with a new message. There ought to be no confusion or disorder within the church ; for she is God's (i. 2) and her life ought to reflect the peace and order of His : **for God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace.** The next clause, **as in all the churches of the saints**, seems better taken as an appendage to ver. 33 (A.V.) than as introduction to ver. 34. On the latter assumption, the repetition of *in the churches* would be rather awkward ; a similar phrase occurs in xi. 16 as the end of a paragraph, and the imperative clause has more force as the first clause than it would have as second. The meaning will then be, that the Corinthians are to beware of violating that divine order which is maintained in the other churches. Westcott and Hort, by bracketing 32, 33a, connect this clause with ver. 31.

**34-36.** The question of church order naturally suggests the place of women in the church. On the principle of the equality of the sexes in Christ (Gal. iii. 28), there is no reason why women should not have spiritual endowments equally with men ; nor, theoretically considered, is there any reason why such gifts as they had should not be used for the edification of the church. But we have already seen the practical difficulties involved (xi. 1-16) in the new position secured for women, at least in principle, by the new religion. A restraint had to be imposed upon their unwomanly use of the liberty which was

their husbands at home : for it is a shame for woman to speak in the church.

36 What ! came the word of God out from you ? or came it unto you only ?

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theirs, and here (vv. 34-36) we find that restraint carried still further. **Let the women keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak :** as the more emotional sex, they would probably have been especially apt to "speak with tongues." **But let them be in subjection, as the law,** that is, the passage in Gen. iii. 15, says also. It is not easy to reconcile this passage with xi. 5, where women do speak and pray, clearly in public ; and one is tempted to adopt the drastic suggestion that vv. 34, 35 are a later interpolation. (a) Their place, Bousset argues, in the MSS. varies ; in one group they appear after ver. 40 ; (b) they are not necessary to the connection—ver. 36 joins well to 33b ; (c) the verses contradict xi. 5, 13 ; (d) they seem to be dependent on 1 Tim. ii. 11 f. If the verses are genuine, we may suppose with Lietzmann, that "in ch. xi. the praying and prophesying of women is unwillingly conceded (the veil however being unconditionally demanded) but here the apostle's real opinion comes out, that women ought to be altogether silent" ; or with Findlay, that Paul is here "thinking of *church-teaching and authoritative direction* as a rôle unfit for women." Teaching is out of the question : if, however, they wish to LEARN anything, they are not to put their questions *in public*, but **at home** ; there let them ask their own husbands (he is clearly therefore thinking of married women), and no other men—there, at home, **for it is a disgrace for a woman to speak in church assembly.** The Corinthians, by the licence they have given their women, are acting as if, in some sense, they were a special church. Paul sharply disabuses them of this idea, if they entertained it, by an ironical question. **It was from you, perhaps, was it, that the word of God, the truth of the gospel, came forth, or was it you only to whom it reached ?** You were not the first to publish it, nor are you the only ones to enjoy it. Some refer this question not exclusively to the behaviour of the women, but to all the points of public worship that have come up for discussion.

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

*Paul's Claim of Inspiration* (xiv. 37, 38).

37, 38. If any one thinks himself to be a prophet, or endowed with spiritual (gifts), let him take knowledge that what I am writing to you, on this question of public worship and spiritual endowments, is the commandment of the Lord Jesus Himself. This is a bold claim to make, which finds its best justification in the sanity of the commands, in the insistence upon edification as a criterion of the gifts, and upon love as the spirit in which they should be exercised. Paul is quite prepared, however, to find his claim disputed : but he will not discuss the point, he simply leaves the objector to the enjoyment of his ignorance. But if any one is ignorant of this, that my instructions are inspired by the Lord Himself, let him remain in his ignorance (pres.). To ἀγνοεῖτω (imper.) there is an alternative reading, ἀγνοεῖται, he is ignored (by God : cf. Mat. vii. 23, xxv. 12), his fate will be condemnation ; but the other translation, presupposing no ellipse, is more natural, and makes a very appropriate conclusion.

*Summary of the Discussion* (xiv. 39, 40).

39, 40. The whole discussion is admirably summarised (*ώστε*, cf. xv. 58), in the two concluding verses. So then, my brethren, covet prophesying, for it is one of the great spiritual gifts (cf. xii. 31, xiv. 1 where ζηλοῦτε is also used), and speaking with tongues—do not encourage, for it is not edifying, but—do not prevent, for it is, after all, a spiritual exercise ; only, of course, if an interpreter can be found, will such speech have a place in the church (ver. 28). But let all things, prophesying, tongues, and all the other exercises of worship (ver. 26) be carried on with seemliness and in order ; there must be no impropriety and no confusion, such as

where speakers spoke at the same time, or the number was unlimited (ver. 27), for these render true *edification* impossible (ver. 26).

This ancient discussion of public worship is most instructive and suggestive. There was a spontaneity about the early Christian service which hardly marks the worship of to-day—an ebullition of feeling inevitable to men to whom Christianity meant an intellectual and spiritual revolution. In this exuberant emotion, when it was uncontrolled, Paul saw a menace to the true spirit of worship : and he insists upon the supreme need of *intelligence, mind*, in public worship. Spiritual fervour is not enough—that alone may create the impression that the church is a gathering of madmen : prayer, praise, preaching, must be engaged in “with the understanding also.” There must be *seemliness* and *order*, every part in its proper place, every speaker possessed of the spirit, yet also master of his own spirit, the whole service pervaded by the beauty and serenity of God Himself (ver. 33). And all this will be secured, if it be remembered that the true end of the church assembly is *edification*. This is a great and fruitful saying, and Paul repeatedly insists upon it. The church meets *to be built up*, and all the exercises are useful, only in proportion as they contribute to that.

The modern church service is undoubtedly inferior to the ancient in affording less scope for the various gifts and capacities of its members. Doubtless there are other spheres where most of these gifts may be exercised, yet it is to the loss of the church that this great opportunity is made so little of. Bengel quaintly remarks, “The public assembly was at that time more fruitful than in the present day, wherein one individual, whatever may be the state of his mind, must fill up the time with a sermon.” In those days every man came prepared with a contribution, psalm, teaching, revelation, or whatever it might be (ver. 26) ; and, though this very circumstance led to confusion, and created the necessity for appointments which would bring “seemliness and order” into church worship, the stateliness which governs our worship, combined with other reasons, has had the indirect, though perhaps not inevitable effect, of suppressing gifts of the most diverse kinds, which would have been capable of contributing not a little to the edification of the church.

## THE RESURRECTION (xv.)

## CHAPTER XV

I MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.

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The discussion of the resurrection is more doctrinal than any other in the epistle, yet the interest in it is not theoretical, but intensely practical, and the discussion is designed to meet a specific situation in the Corinthian church. Some had denied the resurrection (ver. 12), which to Paul was one of the most vital elements in Christian belief: if this were taken away, there was nothing left for the Christian but sorrow in this life, unredeemed by hope for the life to come (ver. 19). The denial of the resurrection could only end in a practical Epicureanism (ver. 32): life would be robbed of its nobleness, and, with a dead redeemer, redemption from sin would be an idle dream (ver. 17). It is probable that those who denied the resurrection of the body did so in the interests of a spiritual view of the world: what they denied was probably not the continuance of personality, but the rising again of *the body* from the dead—they were antimaterialists. But Paul feels that in this denial of the resurrection, everything is at stake—the truth of the gospel, the honour of the apostles, the reality of redemption; and he sets himself with superb earnestness to combat this dangerous heresy with arguments of various kinds.

*The Place of the Resurrection in the Gospel, and the Historical Evidence for it (xv. 1-11).*

1, 2. Paul begins by reminding his readers of the nature of the gospel which he had preached and they had believed, and of the fundamental place held in that gospel by the resurrection. Now—passing ( $\delta\epsilon$ ) from the question of worship

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

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to that of creed (probably suggested to Paul by the letter of the Corinthians, cf. vii. 1, viii. 1, xii. 1, xvi. 1)—I regret that I have to make known to you, again, brethren (for on this matter you ought to be perfectly well informed), the gospel which I preached to you. He had proclaimed it to receptive ears and hearts. It was a gospel, not only which he had preached, but which you on your part received, and received to some purpose: it had made them steadfast, and started them on the way of salvation, being a gospel in which moreover ye stand, through which further ye are being saved. The gospel swept the whole compass of their past, present and future, from the day on which they had believed and received it to the day on which the process of their salvation, then begun, would be completely realized. This gospel which had so signally proved its power, Paul feels the need of declaring to the Corinthians again, as some of them had deliberately abandoned or denied one of its most vital tenets. The meaning of the remaining clauses of ver. 2 is doubtful, though the words themselves are simple enough: literally, with what word I preached (it) to you, if ye hold it fast, unless ye became believers (aor.) heedlessly. Any translation must be inadequate which makes the interrogative *tivu* co-ordinate with the four preceding relatives; but it is not clear whether the clause *with what word I preached to you* goes with *I make known* (cf. R.V.) or, as A.V. and Amer. R.V. take it, with *if ye hold fast*. In the latter case the inversion of the clauses is awkward; though, if the inversion be allowed, the connection with the previous sentence is good; “through which ye are being saved, if ye hold fast with what word I preached to you.” In the former case, “I make known,” . . . “if ye hold fast” do not go well together: Paul’s announcement of the gospel did not depend upon the Corinthians holding it fast. Nevertheless this construction seems, on the whole, preferable to the other: under the influence of the four intervening relative clauses, the introductory *γνωπιζω* is half forgotten; and the *if* clause is practically = “if perchance

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ;

(i.e. I hope) you are holding it fast." The meaning of the last clause (for the redundancy in *ἐκτος εἰ μη*, cf. xiv. 5) is also disputed : *unless ye believed idly*. Does this mean : *unless your faith was vain* (subjective) or *unless the thing you believed was vain* (objective) ? Later (ver. 14) the possibility of the gospel message being an idle tale is contemplated, but such a thought at this stage would be an anticipation. The gospel is powerful : it is the adequacy of their faith in it that he doubts. It cannot itself be a vain thing, for in it they stand, and through it they are saved.

3. This verse, with ver. 4, explains (*γάρ*) the contents of the gospel which had before been proclaimed to them. **For I delivered to you as among the most important things—***πρώτως* first, not in point of time, but of importance—that which also I received. This phrase forcibly recalls xi. 23, and suggests, like it, the duty of transmitting what was committed. Unlike it, the source of the communication is not mentioned. The absence of the phrase *from the Lord* leaves it open to us to suppose that the statements which follow came to Paul through ordinary oral communication from the leaders of the church ; but considering the emphasis which he immediately lays upon Christ's appearing to him (ver. 8) it is possible that something more intimate is here implied. Then follows a summary Christian creed, invaluable as revealing what, to Paul, constituted the essence of the "gospel" : **that Christ died**. It is true that Paul is preparing the way for his statement of the resurrection ; but it is none the less interesting and significant that he passes over all the activities of His *life*, and begins with mention of His *death for our sins*, that is to atone for sin and "to take it out of the world." Paul never regards the death of Christ as the mere result of the historical forces to which, humanly speaking, it was due : it is the consummation of a great divine purpose by which "He was delivered up *for our trespasses*" (Rom. iv. 25 : cf. 2 Cor. v. 18 ff.)—a purpose of which ancient men had had glimpses (cf. 1 Pet. i. 11) and which therefore was fulfilled **according to the Scriptures**. The

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures :

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve :

early church (Acts xvii. 3, etc.) followed the practice of Jesus (Luke xxii. 37, xxiv. 46 f.) in connecting His sufferings with Old Testament prophecy. Probably Isaiah liii. was the passage which hovered most frequently before their minds (cf. Luke xxii. 37) : and, whatever was its original application, nothing was more natural than that from Christians it should receive a Messianic interpretation.

4. The creed, then, is that Christ died, **and that He was buried**—this touch is perhaps added to suggest how really, if only temporarily, He came under the power of the grave, from which He rose triumphant—**and that He has been raised on the third day**. The tenses are very carefully chosen : the death and the burial are historic *facts* (aor.), the effect of the resurrection is abiding (hence *perf.*) : He is *a risen One*. It is not said that Christ rose, but that He *was raised*. His resurrection is the work of God (cf. ver. 15), the divine seal upon the work of Christ. This, too, like the passion, took place, **according to the Scriptures**. The passage in which the resurrection on the third day was believed to have been predicted, appears to have been Hosea vi. 2. “After two days will He revive us ; on the third day He will raise us up.” In Hosea, it is *Israel* who expects to be raised up on the third day. The passage has nothing to do with the Messiah : it is not a prediction of His resurrection, but the people’s expression of hope in the national resurrection. But, like so many other passages in the Old Testament, it came to have a Messianic interpretation (cf. Book of Acts *passim*) ; in Mat. xii. 40, the resurrection is connected with Jonah ii. 1, 2. These N.T. allusions to O.T. prophecy, though not always justified by strict exegesis, suggest a fine conception of history, according to which a divine purpose, in part revealed to and interpreted by men of prophetic instinct, was being worked out throughout the ages, and found its consummation in Christ.

5-7. The truth on which Paul is here insisting as vital to the gospel, and almost synonymous with it, is that of the resur-

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James ; then of all the apostles.

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rection : he therefore proceeds to establish it beyond all doubt by adducing historical *evidence* for it. As this evidence, and not the fact alone, is part of the trust he committed to the Corinthians, he proceeds, *and that* : and the witnesses he adduces are either those who were very conspicuous in the church, like Peter and James, and whose evidence is above all suspicion (cf. ver. 15) ; or witnesses who were accessible, like the survivors of the five hundred. **And that he appeared to Cephas** (Luke xxiv. 34), the usual designation of Peter in Paul's epistles (cf. i. 12), **then to the twelve** disciples, or apostles as they were now called (Luke xxiv. 10) : there were really only ten, Judas and Thomas being absent—**the twelve** is the semi-official designation of the group. The repeated use of *εἰτα* or *ἐπειτα* shows that the order is chronological. Though the following sentences (vv. 6, 7) appear as independent statements, and are not, like vv. 3–5 formally introduced by *that*, they are no doubt part of Paul's "commission" to the Corinthians, as he is making the case for the resurrection as strong as possible. **Then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once** (on an occasion supposed to be alluded to in Mat. xxviii. 17) **of whom the majority survive to this day** and are therefore competent to give evidence at first hand, **though some have fallen asleep** (Christian euphemism for *died*, cf. xi. 30 : aorist, lit. *fell asleep*), consequently their evidence cannot be adduced ; yet, as Bengel finely says, "It was not of less importance to bring forward these as witnesses. They had died in this belief." They *had fallen asleep in Christ* (cf. ver. 18). **Then**, on an occasion not recorded in our Gospels, **he appeared to James**, the brother of the Lord (Gal. i. 19), worthy of special mention here as the leader of the Jerusalem church ; **then to all the apostles**. The preceding mention of "the twelve" makes it possible that *apostles* must here be taken in a wider sense : the meaning may be, however, that on this occasion (whether that of John xx. 26, or more probably Acts i. 2–4) **all** (*πάσιν* at end,

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

emphatic) the apostles were present. It is remarkable that, although Paul is summarizing the most conclusive facts for the resurrection of Christ, he says nothing of the empty grave, nor of the testimony of the women : he does not however profess to give all the evidence, and the testimony of the women might have been challenged by the sceptically minded. It is also remarkable that, of the evidence adduced, so little is known from the gospels : the appearance to Peter is mentioned quite incidentally, and that to James not at all. The gospels tell much, but much is left untold.

**8. And last of all**, last in time and last in dignity (for he is the *least* of the apostles, ver. 9), **as to the one untimely born, He appeared to ME ALSO** (emphatic, at end). When Paul insists upon the truth of the resurrection, he knows whereof he speaks, for the risen Christ *was* actually *seen* ( $\omega\phi\theta\eta$ ) by him on the ever-memorable day on his journey to Damascus. He calls himself the *abortion* (*the abortion* perhaps suggests that this was a nickname) possibly on account of the strangeness and suddenness of his Christian birth. "What an abortion is among children, that am I among the apostles" (Bengel). In his description of Christ's appearance to Himself, Paul uses the same word  $\omega\phi\theta\eta$  (*was seen*) as he had used of the other appearances ; his *vision* of the risen Christ was as real as theirs. He and they alike had *seen* Christ, and therefore were bound to believe in His *resurrection*, not merely in His continued personality.

**9-11. For as for me** ( $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ , emphatic), *abortion* as they called me, and as I am, **I am the least of the apostles, indeed I am not fit to be called apostle, because I persecuted the church of God** : he shudders as he thinks how fierce an opponent he had been of God and His church. Remorse for the misguided zeal of those days ever haunted and humiliated him ; but it is tempered by the thought of the infinite *grace of God*, which had checked him, saved him, and honoured

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the

him by a place of conspicuous *toil* (*ἐκοπίαστα*). Then he was less than nothing, now he *is something* ; the grace of God has made him something. The three-fold repetition of *the grace of God* within one verse shows how overwhelming he feels his debt to God to be for his present state. **But by the grace of God I am what I am**, not an abortion (only) but an apostle, and the most active apostle of all : for **His grace extended towards me did not prove empty**, but, on the contrary, it called and equipped me for abundant toil—Paul responds to the grace of God by a life of unusual toil, which is itself a gift of grace—I toiled (*ἐκοπίαστα* suggests *hard work*) **more abundantly than all of them** together (or, if this be considered too strong an assertion, we may perhaps translate, *than any of them*). The life of labour and persecution which his apostleship involved has already been suggested by iv. 9-13. Paul almost seems to regret the comparison into which he has been led by reflecting upon what the grace of God has made of him ; and at once he checks himself : **yet not I, but the grace of God accompanying me.** *It* rather than he, *it* through and with him, had done the work. But Paul will not let himself be drawn into a discussion irrelevant to his main theme, therefore he abruptly concludes : It matters not **then, whether I or they**, who had the vision and did the work, **this is how we preach, and this is how you then believed** : *this*—the statement he had committed to them about the death and especially the resurrection of Christ (vv. 3, 4). On this crucial point, Peter, James, Paul, were absolutely unanimous.

*The Consequences of Denying the Resurrection (xv. 12-19).*

12. In the preceding paragraph, Paul has established the

dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ?

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resurrection of Christ as a *fact*, by evidence ample, irreproachable, and irrefutable. In spite of this, however, there are some at Corinth who deny, in general, the possibility of resurrection. Paul with great earnestness proceeds to show how utterly disastrous to Christian faith and hope such a denial would be. Now ( $\delta\epsilon$  marks the transition to the real question which was in Paul's mind when he started the discussion) if **Christ is preached that He is risen from (the) dead** : this translation preserves the flavour of the *passive* voice which must not be lost sight of in *ἐγήγερται* (see ver. 4 ; therefore not “*has risen*”), and also of the *perfect* tense. Till we reach ver. 29, the Greek word is simply *dead* (*νεκροί*) not *the dead* : it calls up the dead as *persons* rather than as a class, and is consequently more graphic than the English phrase ; but it is almost impossible to reproduce this touch in English. Paul's sentence is more significant than if he had written, “If *it* is preached that *Christ* is risen.” The theme of the preaching is not a truth, but a *Person*, Christ, either *crucified* (i. 23, where *κηρύσσομεν* is also used), or *risen*—to Paul these two aspects are vitally connected (cf. Rom. iv. 24, 25). If then, the preaching of Christ involves the preaching of His resurrection, **how is it that among you some maintain that there is no such thing as a resurrection of dead men?** Those who so maintained were *some*, perhaps not many ; but against such a deadly heresy a heavy blow must be struck at once. The resurrection of the body would offer a peculiar stumbling-block to the philosophically minded Greeks (cf. Acts xvii. 18, 32), some of whom while believing in the immortality of the soul, regarded the body but as the prison of the soul, neither capable nor worthy of holding any place in the world beyond death. A spiritual *body* was to them a meaningless phrase (cf. ver. 35). They may also have been encouraged in their opinions by Paul's preaching of a mystical death and resurrection with Christ. Apparently they did not deny the resurrection of *Christ* Himself—Paul's argument assumes that they accept it—but they may have regarded that as unique. Paul at once shows them that to accept the one and deny the other is illogical.

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen :

14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God ; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ : whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised :

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain ; ye are yet in your sins.

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13-17. Now if there is no such thing as a resurrection of dead men, then neither is Christ risen : if there can be no risen men, there can be no risen Christ, for Christ belongs to humanity. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is utterly empty (*κενόν*, emphatic), for the risen Christ is the core of it, empty too, is our (or *your*) faith. There is no real substance in our message, and a faith resting upon such a message must be equally hollow : we have nothing to preach, and there is nothing worth believing. And not only so, but we, who are prepared to offer the most circumstantial evidence for our assertions (vv. 5-8), are further discovered to be lying witnesses for God, in that we wronged God by witnessing that He raised Christ, whereas He did not raise Him, if so be then that dead men are not raised. Literally, "in that we testified *against* (rather than *concerning*) God," i.e. wronged Him in testifying. If the resurrection is not true, the apostles, who testify to it, are liars, and that, too, in the highest relationship conceivable—their relationship to God. An impossible supposition surely ! Here the thought is very explicit, which everywhere is implied : Christ does not rise, He is raised : God raises Him. The thought of ver. 13 is repeated with renewed emphasis : for, if dead men are not raised, then neither is Christ risen. The consequences of this would be terrible : and if Christ is not risen, then your faith, which is empty (ver. 14), as it is faith in nothing, is

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

further **fruitless**, it produces no effect in your essentially sinful condition. **Ye are yet within the sphere of your sins**, from which you had supposed you were justified by the resurrection of Christ (Rom. iv. 25). There can be no redemption with a dead redeemer.

18, 19, So it is with the living. The destiny of the dead Christian is equally pathetic. **Then also those who were laid to sleep** (cf. ver. 6) **in communion with a dead Christ perished**, by passing—some suppose—into that misery in Hades which, in the pictorial language of Luke xvi. 23, is the lot of those who die “yet in their sins.” This is perhaps to overpress the words: the reference may simply be to annihilation (cf. Ps. i. 6). If then **in this life we have had only hope in Christ**—no real redemption here, and no realization of the hope hereafter—then **we are more to be pitied than all men**, for our life here is one of ceaseless toil, extreme privation, and bitter persecution (iv. 9-13). This sentiment comes strangely from Paul, whom we should rather have expected to admit that a life lived in the spirit of Christ was, under any circumstances, preferable to every other. Perhaps, at bottom, in spite of his formal disclaimer, that was his real opinion: this utterance but embodies his passionate conviction that the hope he has cherished in Christ in this life must be justified and fulfilled in the life to come. That can only be, if Christ is risen: but of this he is sure (ver. 20).

*The Far-reaching Significance of Christ's Resurrection (xv. 20-28).*

20-22. The previous paragraph had contemplated the terrible consequences for humanity, if the resurrection of Christ were not a fact. **But it is a fact: as it is, Christ is risen** (lit. *hath*

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the

*been raised) from (the) dead*, and from that fact the most momentous consequences flow. He is the founder of a new humanity, and His experience of resurrection will and must be shared by all who are united with Him. This thought is expressed under the imagery of a harvest: Christ is **the first-fruits of them that have fallen asleep**—not necessarily all men, but the Christian dead, according to the ordinary usage of *κοιμᾶσθαι* (xi. 30)—their resurrection is guaranteed in His, as surely as the harvest in the firstfruits (Lev. xxiii. 10 f.). Resurrection comes as inevitably to those who are united to Him, as death to those who are united, as *all* men are, to Adam. To Paul, Christ and Adam are the two supreme Persons in the world's spiritual history—Adam, with whom came sin and death, and Christ who brought deliverance from both (Rom. v. 12 ff.). It is *Man* against *Man*. For since through (a) man there is death, through (a) man also there is the resurrection of the dead: for, as in (through their union with) Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Are we to understand that the latter *all* is universal, like the former? Does Christ's resurrection guarantee the resurrection of all, or only of Christians? In favour of the larger reference is the parallel form of the sentence: in that case, all would be raised to *life*, but only Christians to the final *salvation*. Probably, however, the reference is really narrower: all *in* Adam, in union with and dependence upon him—that is, *all* men—die; similarly all *in* Christ, in union with Him, live. The order of the Greek words may indeed be said to be against this interpretation; but the preposition *ἐν* seems to involve it, and the phrase in the next verse *they that are Christ's* almost settles the matter. The identity suggested between Christ and the “sleepers” by the word *firstfruits* here becomes an even more inward thing: they are not merely like Him, but *in* Him, and *His*.

23-26. **But**, because they are His, and in Him, they are in a sense separate from Him, in a different *rank*; therefore each in his own proper rank: as the firstfruits Christ, then

firstfruits ; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

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those that are Christ's will be made alive at His coming—their quickening is involved in (*ἐν*) His coming, and this probably Paul expected in the near future. Then is the end : when ? and the end of what ? Then (*εἶτα*) apparently indicates a third stage, as the previous *then* (*ἔπειτα*) indicated the second, so that an interval is conceived as elapsing between Christ's coming and the end. In Rev. xx. 4–6, this interval is filled up by the thousand year reign of Christ and believers, and a similar thought, less definite, perhaps, may have been in Paul's mind here. The end is the end of history, when God's purpose shall have been consummated by the triumph of Christ, and He delivers the kingdom to Him who is God and Father—this is due to the Father from the Son—and has done away with (same word in xiii. 8 of prophecies and knowledge) every rule and every authority and power; especially perhaps is Paul here thinking of demonic powers. The goal of history is the absolute and undisputed triumph of Christ : for He must reign until He has, in the words of Ps. cx. 1, put all enemies under His feet. The apostle clinches the Psalmist's words by the addition of *all* : even death, that most terrible enemy, must not escape (ver. 26). “Until He has put”—who? In the Psalm, God ; but not necessarily also here. The subject of the immediate context is Christ, so probably here : He is Conqueror and King. Death is the most redoubtable foe of humanity : it too must be conquered, if Christ's triumph is to be complete. He must not be king of a *dead* world. Therefore (as the) last enemy death is done away : the verb is in the present tense because the destruction of death, though future, is a *certain* fact. For,

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under *him*, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

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He (God) put ALL things, therefore death included, in subjection under His (Christ's) feet. In Psalm viii. 6, by which these words are suggested, it is man, humanity, that is represented as having dominion over the world : the passage is here interpreted Messianically, and applied to Christ. He is the son of man (Ps. viii. 4), and unchallenged dominion must be His.

27, 28. Christ's triumph must indeed be absolute, "over every rule, authority, and power," but not over God. The goal of the great redemptive process is *that God may be all in all*; and therefore the Son, after subjecting all things to Himself, performs His crowning act by subjecting Himself to the Father. He subjected all things: but the words, "all things have been subjected," obviously do not include Him (God) who subjected all those things to Him. It is unfortunate that in so impassioned a context, the meaning should be disputed. The words mean literally: *when He (or it) says (or has said) (that) "all things have been subjected," etc.* Some refer the *He* to Christ, and regard the words *all things have been subjected* as solemnly uttered by Christ before handing over the kingdom to His Father, and crowning His work by subjecting Himself. This would be a magnificent thought; but more probably the meaning is, "when God (that is, in the Psalm) or Scripture says, 'all things, etc.' that is not meant to imply that God Himself is subjected." *And when all things have been subjected to Him, then shall the Son (also), of His own accord (*αὐτός*) subject Himself to Him (i.e. to God) who subjected all things to Him.* The triumph of Christ is for the glory of God. This is the real goal of history, and therefore even Christ the Son must be subject to Him who is at once

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

God and Father : but He subjects *Himself* voluntarily, and this in order that GOD may be all in all (lit. *all things in all* either *things* or *persons*), that is, that His dominion may pervade and interpenetrate everything.

The argument here reaches an impassioned climax. Strict logic is left behind, and Paul is swept impetuously along by his exalted emotion, as he contemplates the risen Christ, victorious over every foe, consummating the great process of redemption by the restoration of His people from death, and then Himself bowing in voluntary submission before the great God and Father, that He might be all in all. It is a most majestic conception of history, upon which one instinctively pauses before the resumption of the more formal argument.

*The Resurrection Alone Explains Christian Practice and Conduct*  
(xv. 29-34).

29. **Else**—if there be no such thing as resurrection—what shall those do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? This curious phrase has received a multitude of explanations; but the most obvious, and probably the correct one, is that the reference is to a custom of having one's self baptized for the benefit of believers who, for whatever reason, had died without baptism. The objection to this is that it seems to imply practically a magical conception of baptism, as though its effects could extend to and be appropriated by the dead ; and further it is argued that Paul could hardly have supported such a conception. In answer it may be said that there is no positive proof that Paul himself did share this belief. He speaks in the third person : “what will *they* do ?”—it is an *argumentum ad hominem*—he may even be said in ver. 30 by the emphatic *we* (*ὑμεῖς*) to dissociate himself from the practice alluded to in ver. 29. But it is perhaps hardly necessary to maintain even this. In the rite of baptism for the dead, the Christians appear to have been but imitating a similar Greek practice, in connection with the “mysteries,” of initiation on behalf of the uninitiated

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with

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dead, and Paul *may* have believed in the efficacy of such baptism by proxy. At any rate the practice of the Corinthians implies a belief in the resurrection, and is absurd if there is none: if dead men are not raised at all, why do they actually (*καὶ*) receive baptism on their behalf?

30-32a. Again, only the resurrection explains the fidelity with which Paul daily faces danger and death. If there be no resurrection, **why do we on our part incur danger every hour?** and not only danger, but risk death: for **I undergo a daily death**,—we have already had a glimpse of the hardship and sorrows with which his career was replete (iv. 11-13: the apostles were as men *doomed to death*, iv. 9: cf. 2 Cor. xi. 23-27). He swears by the thing that is dearest to him, **by the pride in you, brethren, which I have in** (the sphere of) **Christ Jesus our Lord**. Some MSS. read “*by my (ὑπερέπαν*, our) pride, which, etc.” i.e., by my pride as a Christian; but the other (pride in their conversion), seems more effective. Were there no prospect of resurrection and future reward, what reason would there be for him, or any man, facing the terrors which he had faced? **If in human fashion**, impelled by no other desire than that of transient reward and glory, **I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what is the profit to me?** Unfortunately the reference can not be fixed with precision. It is hardly likely that he literally fought in the amphitheatre as an armed gladiator with wild beasts: this would have been incompatible with his Roman citizenship, and such an episode would almost certainly have been mentioned in the book of Acts. More probably it refers to some danger to which he was exposed from the mob, such as in the riot described in Acts xix., and perhaps in the enumeration of his sufferings in 2 Cor. xi. 23-29. He had certainly some terrible experiences at Ephesus (2 Cor. i. 8 f.), but of what nature we do not know. The poem quoted in Titus i. 12 calls the Cretans wild beasts.

32b-34. There is no reward here but hardship and sorrow: if there be no reward hereafter, in other words, **if the dead are**

beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

not raised, then the all but universal inference will be, “**Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die**”—a quotation from Isaiah xxii. 13. If this were Paul’s own conclusion, it would be open to the same criticism as ver. 19; for even if there were no resurrection, the sensual life would still be a tragic mistake. But probably Paul would not himself have adopted this Epicurean conclusion. He is simply illustrating the influence of creed upon character. The creed of the Corinthians was affected by their heathen associations. They may have thought that mattered little: but **do not be misled**, for it matters much, it leads to the *deterioration* of character—**evil associations corrupt good dispositions**—an iambic line (with  $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\alpha$  read as  $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\theta'$ ) of the comic poet Menander, which would not however prove that Paul was familiar with Greek literature, as the line would be in general circulation as a proverb. He concludes the argument, as often, with an exhortation, appealing to them, as intoxicated men, to **awake** ( $\epsilon\kappa$ ) to **soberness** (aor., of the *moment*) in true and proper fashion, and **cease from sin** (pres., of *continued* abstinence)—sins of unbelief and sensuality (ver. 32), whose ultimate root is **ignorance of God**: **for** despite the wisdom on which the Corinthians pride themselves, **some** ( $\tau\iota\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ )—those, for example, who deny the resurrection (ver. 12; also  $\tau\iota\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ )—are involved in ( $\epsilon\chi\omega\sigma\tau\nu$ ) **ignorance of God**, especially of His power to quicken the dead (cf. Mat. xxii. 29). **I speak to move you wise Corinthians to shame.**

#### *The Nature of the Resurrection Body (xv. 35–49).*

Paul is well aware that his passionate argument may yet be inadequate to satisfy the deep-rooted scepticism of some of the Corinthians, to whom both the manner ( $\pi\bar{w}\varsigma$ ) of the

35 But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die :

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*;

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

resurrection, and the nature of the resurrection body ( $\piοιω$ ) were alike inconceivable ; and he devotes this paragraph to a removal of these difficulties, showing that ordinary experience ( $\sigmaν$ ) furnishes analogies to the resurrection body.

35-38. But some objector will say, “How are the dead raised?”—his particular difficulty centreing in the *nature* of the resurrection—hence he asks, “With what sort of body do they come” upon the scene—with the body which was laid in the grave, or some other? The Greeks believed in a survival of personality, but not in a *bodily* resurrection at all : the Pharisees believed that the *earthly* body would be raised again. Paul assails both beliefs : there is a bodily resurrection, but it is not this body of *flesh and blood* (ver. 50) that is raised. And to stumble at the difficulties involved is *foolish*, and betrays one’s incompetence to observe analogies. **Foolish one, the thing that YOU sow**—it lies within *your own* ( $\sigmaν$ ) experience, if you had only the wisdom ( $\alphaφρων$ ) to read it—is not made alive unless it die : every sowing of seed involves the faith that life will issue out of death, so the resurrection need occasion no surprise. **And the resurrection body**, which is inconceivable to the objector, has its analogue also in the experience of the seed. **As for what you sow, it is not the body that is to be that you sow, but something very different, a bare grain—naked, not yet clothed with the body that is to be—perhaps** (for  $\epsilonι τυχοι$ , cf. xiv. 10) **of wheat, or some of the other seeds. But GOD gives it in every case (pres.) a body.** The nature of this body is determined by the *divine will* at creation ( $\etaθελησεν$ , aor.), Gen. i. 11, it is as **He willed**, and it is in every case

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

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*appropriate* (*ἰδιον*), to each seed a body of its own. The God who finds a body for the dead (ver. 36) *seed*, may surely be trusted to find an appropriate body for the dead man.

**39-42.** The point is now elaborated, that the body is appropriate to the nature. Animals are alike in being flesh; but all flesh is not the same flesh, it differs as does the animal. But there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another flesh of birds, another of fishes. And this appropriateness of body to nature extends throughout the universe: it is manifested in the *heavens* as well as on the *earth*. Celestial bodies also there are, and terrestrial bodies. It is doubtful whether the celestial bodies are to be explained as the sun, moon, and stars (as in next verse), or whether we are to think of the bodies of angels (ver. 47, the man from heaven); the former seems the more probable. But the glory of the celestial is of one kind, that of the terrestrial another—again the law of propriety. And within each sphere this law holds: as animals differ in *flesh*, so do the heavenly bodies in *glory*, splendour: there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory. SO ALSO is the resurrection of the dead. This is the climax of the argument at this point. Everywhere throughout the universe the law of propriety reigns: it is this that explains nature's infinite variety: so also is it in the resurrection, which the Corinthians find so hard to understand. The resurrection body will be *different* from this body, and will be *appropriate* to the resurrection state, which he soon explains as a *spiritual* state (*πνευματικόν*).

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**42-44.** The contrast between the two states is now strikingly stated in a sort of rhythmical form :

**It is sown in corruption, it is assuredly (pres.) raised in incorruption ;**

**It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory :**

**It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.**

From the reference to the *glory* of the resurrection body, it is clear that Paul is dealing only with "those that are Christ's" (ver. 24). The present and the future state are trenchantly characterized each by three epithets. If the *sowing* be taken to refer to burial (cf. ver. 36) then the first three concentrate pathetic attention upon the dead body. Others, however, have referred the sowing to *birth*. Though this is improbable, the reference is perhaps not exclusively to burial: the epithets suggest the law of weakness and corruption to which *all* our earthly life is subject. The resurrection body is ever fresh and fair and strong. The pith of the contrast is contained in the last statement :

**It is sown a natural (or animal) body, it is raised a spiritual body.** A similar contrast between the natural and spiritual has already been drawn in ii. 14, 15. We have unfortunately no word which exactly corresponds to *ψυχικόν*. The *psychic* body is one which is governed by the *ψυχή*, the principle of "the sensuous and transitory life." It is the "inner side of the flesh" (Bousset), and is opposed to the *spiritual* body, which is governed by the *πνεῦμα*, the supernatural principle, and the guarantee of eternal life. The contrast is roughly that between our material and spiritual, natural and supernatural. This then is the answer to the sceptical question raised in ver. 35. The body in which the dead come is not their earthly body, but a *spiritual*, supernatural body, appro-

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthly : the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

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priate to the future state. If (reading *ει*) there exists a natural body (a body adapted to the *ψυχή*), there exists also a spiritual body (a body adapted to the *πνεῦμα*) : the law of correspondence makes the one as credible as the other.

45-47. Paul finds the contrast upon which he is insisting, anticipated or at least suggested, by Gen. ii. 7—and *man became a living soul*; for the sake of his contrast between Adam and Christ, he adds to *man* “first” and “Adam.” So also it stands written, “The first man Adam became a living soul”; the last Adam a life-giving spirit. Adam and Christ as the leaders of the two humanities have already been contrasted (ver. 22). Paul reads his own meaning into the Greek word *ψυχή*; Adam is the representative, the inaugurator, of life on its *psychic*, material side. And just as surely is Christ the inaugurator of *spiritual* life. He became not soul, but *spirit*, and not simply a living spirit, but a *life-giving spirit* (ver. 36) : “in Him shall all be made alive” (ver. 22). The whole drift of the argument suggests that Christ attained this power at and by His resurrection. But this relation of Christ to Adam is in accordance with the general principle that the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. And as Adam and Christ differ thus in nature, so do they differ in body. The first man is of the earth, made of the dust: the translation “of the earth, earthly” suggests to the English reader that the Greek noun and adjective are cognate. This is not so: *χοϊκός* is meant to recall *χοῦν* (dust) of Gen. ii. 7. In contrast with the man “of the dust,” the second man is of heaven. Strictly speaking, the conception here is local (cf. *εξ*), but the context seems to

48 As *is* the earthly, such *are* they also that are earthly : and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery ; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

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necessitate the larger reference to Christ's heavenly nature : He has a *heavenly*, immaterial, *spiritual* body.

48-49. Those two Men are the representatives of types ; and as is the man of the dust, such are also the men of the dust ; and as is the heavenly man, such also are the heavenly men. The types share the nature of their leader. And as we wore the image, the outward and bodily form, of the man of dust, we shall also wear the glorious image of the heavenly Christ. Instead of *φορέσομεν*, many good MSS. read *φορέσωμεν*, *let us wear* ; but the moral appeal is rather irrelevant here. Paul is here concluding and summarizing his argument for the possibility and nature of the resurrection body.

*Death is Swallowed up in Victory* (xv. 50-58).

50. One question remains. Analogies have been offered to show that the resurrection body will differ from the earthly body : how will the change be effected ? Before this question is touched, however, the argument thus far is briefly summarized. Now this I affirm (cf. vii. 29), brethren, that flesh and blood, that is, our animal, material bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, which is a *spiritual* realm ; nor, in the nature of things (*pres. ind.*), does corruption (ver. 42) inherit incorruption. The material has no claim by *inheritance* upon the spiritual : the two spheres are different. And not only is another body conceivable (vv. 35 f.), it is necessary.

51-53. Paul's understanding of the transition from the one body to the other, he claims to have received through *revelation*.

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on

Behold—what he is about to say deserves special attention—I tell you a mystery, dark to the uninitiated, revealed to him : we shall not all sleep (*i.e.* die, cf. xi. 30), but we shall all be changed. In imagining that some would be alive (*not all asleep*) at the coming of Christ, Paul clearly expects that coming soon : but as that expectation was not fulfilled, the negative is found transferred in some MSS. from the first clause to the second, thus turning πάντες (*μὲν*) οὐ κοιμηθσόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα into πάντες (*μὲν*) κοιμηθσόμεθα, οὐ π. δ. ἀλλ (we shall all die, but we shall not all be changed). As the present body is not fit for the future world, *all*—not only the dead (as is natural), but also the living—shall be changed in a moment so brief as to be *invisible* (*ἀτόμῳ*), in the twinkling of an eye, at (lit. *in*, to the accompaniment of) the last trumpet (cf. i Thes. iv. 16), the trumpet (associated with the divine appearance in Exod. xix. 16) which brings history to an end (cf. Mat. xxiv. 31). For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and therefore fit for the eternal world, and we who are alive shall be changed. And change is necessary ; for, because there is no place there for *flesh and blood*, this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. The change is a *putting on*, as of a garment. In the double *τοῦτο* (this), Paul may be thinking of his own poor body, daily exposed to hardship (iv. 9–13) and death (xv. 31). For the glory of the blessed, cf. Dan. xii. 3, and for their fair robes, Rev. iii. 4, vi. 11, vii. 9.

54. Already, in ver. 53, Paul's words have begun to take on a rhythmic and poetic swing, which develops in the next four verses into a triumphant hymn of praise. But when this

immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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corruptible shall have put on incorruption (this clause is rejected from the text of Westcott and Hort, and *may* be a conformation to ver. 53; but its attestation is good, and its echo of ver. 53 adds to the solemnity of the passage) and this mortal shall have put on immortality—in the moment of that swift and solemn change—then shall come to pass the ancient prophetic word that is written in Isaiah xxv. 8, “Death was swallowed up so as to issue in (*εἰς*) victory.” The words in Isaiah, as now pointed, read “He hath swallowed up death *for ever*.” The Greek translation *unto victory* put the Aramaic meaning upon the Hebrew words *for ever*: but the essential meaning is not altered—death is utterly destroyed.

55. The thought of the destruction of death by the victory of Christ kindles Paul to the most exalted enthusiasm. He turns defiantly to death, and asks, in an adaptation of the words of Hosea (xiii. 14). “O Death, where *is* thy victory? O Death, where *is* thy sting?” In their original context in Hosea, the words appear to have a very different meaning: the powers of death are summoned to crush impenitent Israel. “Hither, O death, with thy plagues! Hither, O Sheol (so in some MSS. of Cor. *Hades* in second clause) with thy destruction; for pity is hidden from mine eyes.” Paul is here guided as usual (though not always: the Greek version of Is. xxv. 8, just quoted, reads, “death has prevailed and swallowed [men] up”) by the Septuagint.

56, 57. Death is like a giant scorpion with a *sting*: now the sting of death *is* sin—it was this that brought death into the world (Rom. v. 12 ff.), and the fear of judgment for sin increases the sting and the horror of death—and the power of sin is

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

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the law, for through the law came the knowledge of sin, in all its portentous power, as disobedience (cf. Rom. vii. 7 ff., Gal. iii. 19). But the power of the law, sin, and death is broken by the resurrection victory of Christ, and that victory is shared by those that are His. **Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Our victory over death is a gift, of God, won through *Christ*; and though yet enjoyed only in foretaste, it is sure (hence *pres.* διδόντι). The great Victor is solemnly named in full—*our Lord Jesus Christ*—and with this shout of triumphant gratitude the splendid argument closes.

58. But to Paul Christian hope is an inspiration to duty, and it is highly characteristic and significant that he draws from his great argument a practical conclusion. **So then, my beloved brethren, show yourselves steadfast, immovable, unshaken by sceptical assaults upon the resurrection** (vv. 12, 35)—for it is sure—and not only in *belief* unshaken, but in *conduct* also fruitful, abounding evermore in the work of the Lord, that which He gives His servants to do (cf. xvi. 1), **inasmuch as ye are fully aware** (especially after Paul's long and persuasive argument), **that your toil is not empty in the Lord**, as it would be if there were no resurrection (cf. vv. 19, 32). Work done *in the Lord*, in fellowship with the risen and triumphant Christ, cannot be *vain*, it has a sure place in the eternal world (cf. ver. 22b).

The long, sustained, and glowing argument of Paul for the resurrection shows how vital he felt it to be to Christian faith and life (cf. vv. 14, 17), and it is worthy of note that he begins his argument by building it upon evidence. The Christian faith is not a pious imagination, it rises out of the facts; and though certain phases of Christianity have tried to shake themselves free of history, the Christianity of the New Testament rests upon facts, and could not have been, if they had never

been. The belief in the resurrection rests upon the fact. *He was seen* (ver. 5).

We to-day still share the curiosity of the Corinthians who asked : how are the dead raised ? and Paul's answer, though not exhaustive, is still suggestive. What a spiritual body is, we may not be able to imagine ; but, at any rate, it remains true that our future condition, like our present, will be adapted to our environment. That is the essence of Paul's argument. The future body will not be this earthly one, but another : *we shall be changed.*

Again, the power of creed to influence conduct is several times suggested in the course of the discussion. Belief in the resurrection nerves a man to fight with wild beasts (ver. 32) and to abound in all good and beneficent work (ver. 58). Persecution may be bravely borne, and work greatly done by one, who has, like Paul, the glorious vision of Christ victorious over death, appearing to deliver the kingdom into His Father's hands (ver. 24), securing, by His victory, a like victory for us (ver. 57), and for our work a permanent place in the eternal order (ver. 58).

## CONCLUDING INSTRUCTIONS, SALUTATIONS, AND BENEDICTION (xvi.)

## CHAPTER XVI

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

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*The Collection for the Jerusalem Poor (xvi. 1-4).*

1, 2. Fresh from his great argument for the resurrection, Paul immediately enjoins upon the Corinthians the practical duty of contributing to the financial support of the poor Christians at Jerusalem (cf. Rom. xv. 26, 31). **Now concerning the collection for the saints** ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\delta\acute{e}$ , cf. vii. 1, viii. 1, xii. 1 : Paul's advice on this point had probably been asked). This seems a violent transition from the exalted theme of ch. xv. but the connection is most intimate : This is part of the *work of the Lord* (xv. 58), which is to be done, like all Christian work, in the inspiration of the resurrection hope. The church at Jerusalem seems to have been particularly poor, and the burden of their support was largely laid upon the Gentile churches (cf. Gal. ii. 10). Under the stimulus of Paul, contributions were organized among these churches (cf. Rom. xv. 26), which were perhaps intended partly to strengthen the bond between the Gentile and the Jewish churches (cf. 2 Cor. ix. 12-14). **As I gave order to [the churches of Galatia]**—of this order we have no record—so also do ye. The plan suggested is a revelation of Paul's instinct for practical affairs. **On every** (*κατὰ*) **first day of the week**, not yet regularly known as *the Lord's day* (Rev. i. 10), **let each of you lay something by him, making a store of it, whatever**

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia : for I do pass through Macedonia,

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he may be prospered in, that, when I come, there may not THEN be collections going on. In Acts xx. 7, the church meets on the first day of the week: from the injunction here to each man to lay up *by himself*, we may infer that there was then no collection at the church services. The advice is pointed and practical: *each* one, poor as well as rich; *regularly*, on *every* first day of the week, the day when the thought of the resurrection of Christ (xv.) should touch men's hearts to peculiar gratitude: the *regular* accumulation of even a small weekly sum would make a *store*: and the gift was to be a *reasonable* one, in proportion to the prosperity which God had granted a man. The collection is to be ready when Paul arrives—his precious time must be given to other matters.

3, 4. The collection was to be taken to Jerusalem by approved Corinthian delegates. And on my arrival, those delegates whom you may approve, I shall send with (lit. *by means of*) letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem. Paul wishes to be free of even the shadow of suspicion (2 Cor. viii. 20); hence his suggestion of delegates. Westcott and Hort put a comma after δι' ἐπιστολῶν,—“whom ye approve by letters” rather than “I will send with letters”: but there would be little point in the approval by letter, *after* Paul had already arrived. But if it is worth my while to go too, they shall go with me: if the gift is a creditable one,—but not unless—Paul will accompany the deputation, or rather they him. In both clauses he gently, but firmly, asserts his dignity—dignity without pride.

*Plans for Travelling* (xvi. 5–9).

5–9. But I will come to you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia, for I am to pass through Macedonia,

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

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but with you people of Corinth I shall perhaps stay, or even spend the winter,—in point of fact he spent three months in Greece (Acts xx. 3)—that **YOU** may send me off upon any journey that I may take—Jerusalem and even Rome were at this time in his thoughts (Acts xix. 21). He does not go direct by the sea route from Ephesus to Corinth, but first to Macedonia, and then south. *You* is in both cases emphatic: he honours the Corinthians by looking to *them* for his “send-off.” For I do not wish to see you now merely in passing, as I should were I to go to Macedonia via Corinth; for I am hoping to stay with you some length of time, should the Lord (probably Christ, rather than God) permit (cf. iv. 19). But I shall stay on in Ephesus till Pentecost—Whitsuntide: he is writing probably in early spring. For a door—an opportunity for preaching the gospel (Col. iv. 3; 2 Cor. ii. 12)—great and effectual, is open to me, and opponents there are many. Paul’s reasons for remaining on are characteristic,—a great opportunity and great opposition: how great the opposition may be measured by the riot which compelled him to leave (Acts xix.).

*Concerning Timothy and Apollos (xvi. 10-12).*

**10-11.** If Timothy, whom Paul had sent to Corinth (iv. 17) by way of Macedonia (Acts xix. 22) with Erastus, should come, see that he be with you without fear—he was

11 Let no man therefore despise him : but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me : for I look for him with the brethren.

12 As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren : but his will was not at all to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

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young and may have been timid, especially in view of the Corinthian factions and turbulence—for he is doing the work of the Lord (xv. 58) like myself. Let no man therefore despise him, but send him off in peace, without strife and contention, that he may come to me, for I am expecting him with the brethren—either the brethren (some besides Erastus, Acts xix. 22) with Timothy, or “I with the brethren,” *i.e.* the Corinthian delegates.

12. But concerning Apollos whom he finely recognizes as the brother, not a rival (i. 12), I earnestly entreated him to come to you with the brethren who would carry Paul's letter to Corinth (cf. ver. 17) : but Apollos's delicate feeling, in view of the partisan spirit in Corinth, deterred him : and there was no will at all on his part to come now : he will come, however, when he has a good opportunity. This verse reflects the utmost credit on both Paul and Apollos, who, despite the Corinthian party cries, were on the best of terms.

*Injunction, Entreaty, and Thanksgiving* (xvi. 13–18).

13–14. The abrupt admonitions that follow have a startling effect, and serve to remind the Corinthians of their besetting weaknesses. Watch—they were careless, asleep : stand in the faith (cf. xv. 58)—their faith, e.g. in the resurrection had been unsettled (xv. 12, 35) ; play the man, not the baby (xiv. 20) : show yourselves vigorous, not flabby ; let all

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus : for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours : therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and

your (doings) be done in love—that is to be the atmosphere and inspiration of all activity (xiii.).

15-18. Now I beseech you, brethren : ye know the house of Stephanas—which Paul had baptized (i. 16)—that (disregarding one or two isolated converts, Acts xvii. 34) it is the firstfruits of Achaea (as Epaenetus was of Asia, Rom. xvi. 5), and that they set themselves to minister to the saints—apparently the family was well to do : I beseech you, then, that you on your part (*κατ*) subject yourselves to such—there was little organization as yet (cf. xii. 28), but such were the men who deserved to be recognized as leaders (here we may find the office of deacon in embryo, cf. Rom. xvi. 1)—and to every one that joins in the work and toils. And I rejoice at the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus (of whom we know nothing), because the lack of you these brethren supplied, for they refreshed my spirit and yours. The Corinthians will themselves be refreshed to hear that their delegates have refreshed Paul. “That which was lacking on your part” does not seem so relevant here for τὸ ὑμ. ιστέρημα as the lack of you, i.e. your society (on my part). Acknowledge then and honour men like these.

*Parting Salutations (xvi. 19-24).*

19-20. The churches of Asia—the lands on the western shores of Asia Minor—salute you. “All who call on the

Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with a holy kiss.

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran atha.

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name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 2) are brethren. **Aquila and Prisca** (cf. Rom. xvi. 3) or Priscilla, whom Paul had first met at Corinth (Acts xviii. 2), and with whom he had subsequently gone to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 18 f.), **salute you earnestly in the Lord, with the church that is at their house**, which they had put at the disposal of the Christians for their meetings. **All the brethren in Ephesus salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.** The kiss of friendship was specially appropriate among Christians : to them it has a sacred meaning, it is a *holy* kiss. It came in course of time to be abused.

21-24. Paul now takes the pen from his amanuensis (cf. Rom. xvi. 22) and adds a brief, but impassioned postscript (cf. 2 Thes. iii. 17, Gal. vi. 11). **The salutation of me Paul, with my own hand.** If any man has no affection for the Lord, let him be anathema, devoted to destruction ; for without love to Christ there can be no true or fruitful Christian activity of any kind. **Maran atha, i.e. O (or our) Lord, come :** this seems better than to read "Maran atha," *The (or our) Lord has come* (i.e. in the flesh ; but better interpreted as prophetic perf. : will assuredly come). The prayer *Lord, come*, would be common (cf. Rev. xxii. 20) among those who hoped for and believed in the speedy advent of Jesus. Like Abba the Aramaic words may have been caught from the early disciples, and would probably be familiar to Greeks. The prayer here adds a terrible earnestness to the preceding imprecation ; and by the removal of the enemies of Christ, the way is prepared for the benediction—the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. And as censure and reproof had neces-

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus.  
Amen.

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sarily formed a large part of this epistle, Paul tactfully and tenderly adds : **my love be (or is) with you all—not with the Pauline or any other party only (i. 12)—in Christ Jesus** ; his love for the Cor. is not merely natural affection, Christ is its foundation and sphere.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE  
CORINTHIANS



## SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

### INTRODUCTION

IT is unfortunate that the epistle which is in many ways the most interesting, as it is the most biographical, of all the epistles of Paul, should be beset by numerous problems which, with the meagre data at our disposal, are practically insoluble. In the New Testament as in the Old, we suffer from the fragmentary nature of our sources. Histories, prophecies, gospels, epistles were written primarily for ancient readers, not for us who are afar off both in time and place ; and what to us, in our ignorance of the contemporary situation, is and must for ever remain obscure or uncertain, to them, with their knowledge of that situation, must have been often not only intelligible, but obvious. But, by its very constitution, the human mind is governed by the desire to ascertain the sequences of history, to discover the interrelations of recorded facts ; and where the records are meagre there is a natural impulse to fill up, by conjecture or by the use of the historical imagination, the gaps which the scanty material at our disposal permits us to fill up in no other way. We must only beware of assuming that our conjecture has the value of certainty.

In the interval between the despatch of the first and second epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, many things of grave importance must have happened ; but

these we are left to infer mostly from the data furnished by the epistles themselves; and, as is proved by the perplexing variety of opinion among scholars who have given the epistles the most minute and careful attention, and even by the modifications which some have been constrained to make upon their own earlier opinions, those data are capable of widely different interpretations. The one thing that stands out clear and indisputable is that the situation implied by the second epistle is much more intense than that of the first. The first is relatively calm, the second is tempestuous. There are hints in the first that Paul's authority and apostleship have been challenged (ix. 1 f.); in the second, the denials of that authority have become explicit and vehement (x.-xiii.), and are supported by the basest insinuations (xii. 16 ff.). In the first, he is criticized (iv. 3), in the second, he is attacked. The spirit of faction has grown in the interval to enormous proportions, but it has changed its form. The watchwords "I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos," are no longer heard; but men who claim to be Christ's (cf. 1 Cor. i. 12) have set themselves with virulence to undermine the apostle's influence (2 Cor. x. 7).

This party, whose leaders at any rate with their letters of recommendation (iii. 1) no doubt hailed from Jerusalem, were the propagandists of an intense and narrow Judaistic Christianity. Their methods were different from those of the propagandists in Galatia, for they have nothing to say about circumcision—perhaps they felt the irrelevance of this in the free atmosphere of Greece—but, for that very reason, their assault was all the more plausible, and, judging from the vehemence with which Paul repels it, it is

clear that he recognized in it a grave menace to his own work. Everywhere he went, his steps were dogged by these men, who refused to do any pioneer missionary work of their own, but who stepped in to appropriate results ready to their hand (x. 16) wrought by the indefatigable toil of Paul, and then to pervert those results in the interests of their small and bigoted views of Christianity.

This development between the two epistles is as good as certain, but was there anything else? The letter begins with great emotion, in which we may see reflected some of the perilous and crucial experiences through which Paul has been recently passing. At Ephesus, which he had left not long before, he had been face to face with death (i. 8); the situation, whatever it was, had been a desperate one, and it was only by the miraculous deliverance of God that he had come out of it alive. He had pushed on to Troas; and eager as he was to win men for the gospel in season and out of season, and splendid as was the opportunity afforded by Troas (ii. 12), he was so nervous and excited because he did not, as he had hoped, meet Titus there, that he could not wait in Troas, but hastened on to meet him in Macedonia from one of whose cities—possibly Thessalonica—he despatched this letter to Corinth (cf. ix. 2). The news which Titus brought him was so reassuring that he bursts into a song of triumph at the very recollection of it (ii. 14 ff.). His torn soul was comforted and gladdened not only by the presence of Titus, but by the story he had to tell of the penitence and zeal of the Corinthians (vii. 6 f.).

Now why was Paul filled with such trepidation at the approach of Titus, so anxious about the news he

would bring from Corinth? Clearly the situation in Corinth was specially critical: to what was it due? In vii. 8 f. it is connected with a letter of Paul's, couched apparently in terms so severe, that afterwards he regretted having written it, though his regret was turned into joy when he saw how effective it had been in leading the Corinthians to repentance. This letter is described in ii. 4 as having been written out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears. The question is, Where are we to look for this letter and what were its contents?

Perhaps the natural impulse is at once to identify it with the first canonical epistle to the Corinthians; but as against this, it must not be forgotten that in all probability, several letters would pass between Paul and the Corinthians. One, which has not been preserved, is alluded to in 1 Cor. v. 9; and his opponents admit that his *letters* are impressive (2 Cor. x. 10). The real question is, whether the first epistle answers to the description given in chs. ii. and vii. As this is absolutely denied by some scholars, and maintained by others to be perfectly possible, the question comes to be largely one of our conception of probability. Would Paul, we have to ask, be likely to regret having written so noble a letter as the first epistle? and is it reasonable to suppose that that letter could have been written with anguish and tears? These terms certainly seem strong, if used of the first epistle; but are they too strong? While there is much in that epistle that could be described as "calm and kindly," there are passages which so ethically sensitive a man as Paul must have written with keen emotion, especially those which deal with the inces-

tuous man, with the carrying of cases before the heathen courts, and with the heinousness of immorality (v., vi.; cf. xv. 34). With regard to the other point, perhaps we ought not to press too vigorously the statement that Paul regretted having written it; such words rise readily to his open, affectionate heart (2 Cor. vi. 11), especially now that he has been cheered by the news of their repentance, and he may mean no more than that he regretted the pain his letter had given them. It cannot be said, however, that, so far as these allusions go, the case for the identification of the letter with First Corinthians is overwhelmingly convincing. At most, it is possible; before we can say whether it is probable or not, we shall have to consider the contents of the letter.

On the strength of the letter, the Corinthians, at least the majority of them (ii. 6), appear to have severely punished some one who had done wrong (vii. 11, 12)—so severely indeed that Paul now interposes on his behalf, asks them to forgive and comfort him, and confirm their love towards him (ii. 7, 8). Who can the offender be? If the letter written with tears be the first epistle to the Corinthians, then the offender will naturally be the incestuous man of ch. v. In that chapter, Paul in the severest terms (cf. ver. 5) had insisted upon his excommunication. But, as there was already disaffection in the air, fomented still further by the malevolence of his Judaistic opponents, he may well have cherished the gravest doubts as to the readiness of the Corinthians to acknowledge his authority and comply with his request; and, now that Titus brings back the news of their quickened moral sense, and of their zeal for the purity of the church as shown by the punishment

of the offender; now that they have proved themselves to be pure in the matter (vii. 11), and obedient to him in all things (ii. 9), he is more than overjoyed, and, as the offender himself has shown signs of the deepest contrition (ii. 7), Paul is as eager now to have him reinstated as he formerly was to have him excommunicated.

But the identification of the offender of 2 Cor. with the incestuous person of 1 Cor. becomes less certain when we look more closely at the description of him. Paul declares in vii. 12 that he wrote the letter "not for the sake of him who did the wrong," whereas, according to 1 Cor. v. 5, it was precisely for his sake—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The references to the offender in ii. 5-10 make it at least possible that it is *Paul* whom he has offended: Paul and not the father, whose wife he had taken, would be the man who has "suffered the wrong" (vii. 12). Paul apparently has good reason to feel specially aggrieved (ii. 5), but though most deeply wounded, he has already most freely and fully forgiven. This has given rise to the idea that on some recent visit to Corinth (to be discussed afterwards) Paul had been grossly insulted by some one, and had afterwards demanded reparation in a letter written with anguish and tears; the demand had been so zealously acceded to by the now penitent congregation that Paul prays for clemency for the offender, and offers him his own forgiveness. In favour of this view, it is urged that Paul could not have spoken of the offender as leniently as he does, had his crime been that of incest: the stern and solemn sentence of excommunication appropriate to such a crime could not have been so

swiftly and completely reversed. But the argument is hasty. The sinner was clearly not indifferent to the verdict pronounced upon him, there is a danger that he may be “swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow” (ii. 7); and sincere penitence would most naturally be met by complete forgiveness, which Paul bestows as “in the presence of Christ” (ii. 10). In a true sense, the real object of the excommunication was “neither for the sake of him that did or suffered wrong” (vii. 12), but the preservation or rather the rehabilitation of the purity of the church (vii. 11, 1 Cor. v. 7), the deepening of the consciousness of its spiritual obligations. It cannot be said then that the allusions to the offender are altogether inconsistent with the idea that he is the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v., and this again would greatly heighten the probability that the letter written with tears was the first epistle to the Corinthians.

The complicated questions raised by the allusions to the “letter” are still more gravely complicated by allusions to his visit to Corinth. In spite of the slender doubt that attaches to the somewhat ambiguous phrase “this is the third time *I am ready* to come to you” (xii. 14)—it is reasonably certain that before he wrote the second epistle he had already been in Corinth twice, and is now contemplating a third visit (xiii. 1), which he carried out (Acts xx. 2 f.),—indeed he writes this epistle on the way (ix. 2, Acts xx. 1). He says expressly—the language is capable of no other natural interpretation—that he had been present (in Corinth) *the second time* (xiii. 2). That visit,—the one contemplated, as some suppose, in 1 Cor. iv. 18–21,—had been a very painful one—(2 Cor. ii. 1): he had been completely humiliated

by the unchastity and impenitence of many (xii. 21). Where are we to place this visit and has it any connection with the letter written in anguish and tears?

There is a large body of opinion in favour of the idea that the second visit falls between the first and second epistles. With more or less modification, the general situation is usually then reconstructed as follows. After sending the first letter, Paul determines to visit Corinth personally, whether because of an unfavourable account which Timothy (1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10) may have brought him (though it is not certain that Timothy actually reached Corinth, Acts xix. 22), or because he intended to prolong his stay in Ephesus a little beyond his original plan. On reaching Corinth, he finds the prevalent mood anything but friendly, the church seriously disturbed, his influence undermined and his authority challenged by his Judaizing opponents. This would then be the visit which he had made in pain, the occasion upon which his God had humiliated him. The air was rife with calumny and insult, as in any case we gather from x.-xiii., and some one, more daring or virulent than the rest, publicly insulted him (this would then be the man "who did the wrong"). In any case, for whatever reason—Paul's malady has been suggested as a reason (xii. 7, Gal. iv. 14)—his appearance was altogether ineffective, and went to justify the taunts of his adversaries (x. 10). He left in sorrow and indignation, and afterwards wrote the letter whose severity he was inclined to regret. Titus, apparently the most energetic and diplomatic of Paul's coadjutors, went to Corinth either with or soon after the letter, with the result that the attitude of the Corinthians towards Paul was changed from rebellion

to penitence and apology. Titus returned with the good news, meeting Paul in Macedonia, whereupon Paul, his feverish anxiety now at rest, wrote his second epistle amid conflicting emotions of gratitude at the restoration of confidence between himself and the Corinthian Church, and indignation at the unworthy attempts of his opponents to injure his reputation and ruin his influence.

On this view the letter would not be First Corinthians, but one intermediate between the first and second epistles. The proposal has been made to identify this letter with the last four chapters of the second epistle (x.-xiii.) which undoubtedly form a compact section by themselves, and which are written with an irony, an incisiveness, and a severity which answer not unaptly to his descriptions of the letter. But practically fatal to this view is the fact that there is in these chapters no allusion, as there must have been in the letter, to the offender ; and there is in reality no valid reason for separating chs. x.-xiii. from the rest of the epistle.

There can be no doubt that, on this scheme of events, the futile intermediate visit, followed by the severe but successful letter, presents a very plausible combination ; but it cannot be said to be absolutely necessary. If the letter which was written in sorrow and productive of sorrow may fairly be identified with the first epistle—and Bernard is certainly within the truth when he says that “it has not been proved that the ‘Painful Letter’ of 2 Cor. ii. 4, vii. 8, cannot have been the First Epistle”—then one link in the chain is weak, if not broken. And, as there were certainly two visits, and no evidence but that of inference for an intermediate visit, the possibility

must be admitted that both visits fell before the first epistle.

The second epistle was probably written a few months after the first, somewhere in the early winter of the same year (? 57 A.D.). We find Paul in Acts xx. 3 leaving Greece, after his third and last visit, for Jerusalem. As this was about Easter, and he had spent three months in Greece (Acts xx. 3, 6) we may conjecture that he arrived there from Ephesus about the end of the preceding year. As we have no reason to believe that his journey from Ephesus to Corinth by Macedonia (Acts xx. 1, 2) occupied any considerable length of time, we may fairly assume that Paul left Ephesus in the autumn—later therefore than he had originally planned, as he had intended to stay in Ephesus only till Pentecost (1 Cor. xvi. 8). This letter, which was written from Macedonia (2 Cor. ix. 2) would fall a little later. With this agrees the statement that the Corinthians had since last year begun to make preparations for the collection for the Judæan poor (ix. 2, viii. 10); it is clear that the matter had already been in their minds and that they had written to ask Paul's advice about the best manner of raising the money (1 Cor. xvi. 1).

The letter falls naturally into three parts : (a) chs. i.—vii., which, while embracing a variety of personal matters, deal in general with the glory of the new dispensation as contrasted with the old ; (b) chs. viii.—ix. constitute a plea for a liberal collection for the Judæan poor ; (c) chs. x.—xiii. are a very spirited vindication of himself and assault upon his opponents. His disposition of the letter, as Heinrici points out, is very skilful. The passage dealing with the collec-

tion for the Judæan poor, placed as it is midway between the other two, on the one hand seals the claim to authority which Paul has made or implied in the first section, and prepares for the polemic against his Judaistic opponents in the third, besides suggesting incidentally, by his affectionate solicitude for the Judæan poor, that, whatever open charges or covert insinuations his opponents may make, there is no quarrel between himself and the leaders of the Jerusalem church.

The presence of the opponents, who occupy the foreground in the last division of the epistle, is even in the first division not unfelt. It is they who deal with the word of God in the spirit of a dishonest tradesman (ii. 17), it is they who come to Corinth with letters of recommendation (iii. 1), and the contrast between the permanence of the new dispensation and the transience of the old (iii.) is in one aspect an indirect polemic against them. Even after making every allowance for the sarcasm and the vehemence into which Paul's righteous indignation betrays him, his charges show that some of their methods were as odious as their gospel was false. It was another gospel, different from Paul's, a gospel with another spirit, that they preached (xi. 4); and with their different gospel went a different and lower moral standard. Indeed they have no standard beyond themselves, and so are guilty of ridiculous and immoderate boasting (x. 12). When Paul has done the pioneer work, they come upon the scene like evil spirits (xi. 15), at once appropriating and perverting the results of his labours (x. 16), but taking good care to break no new ground for the gospel on their own account. In xi. 13-15 the indict-

ment takes a form of unusual severity ; he calls them there “false apostles, crafty workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder ; for even Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. It is nothing remarkable, then, if *his ministers* also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness.” Those “Hebrews, Israelites, of the seed of Abraham” (xi. 23) are ministers of Satan ! Clearly it is a case of war to the knife.

Let us see now what they had said or done to provoke so vehement a retort from Paul. They roundly accuse him of determining his life and conduct by unspiritual motives, of “walking according to the flesh” (x. 2). They admitted that his letters were impressive (x. 10), but used this very circumstance as a foil to disparage him : impressive on paper, but ineffective face to face (x. 10), a hero at a distance, but a coward at close quarters (x. 1). His escape from Damascus over the wall was apparently used to make him ridiculous (xi. 31 f.). Yet, coward as he was, he liked to play the tyrant (i. 24). They taunted him with his lack of rhetorical skill of which Greeks made so much (xi. 6). He could be no apostle this, they argued, for he refused to accept support in return for his services (xi. 7). Did not this refusal betray an uneasy consciousness that he was no apostle ? Nay, worse : they were mean enough to insinuate that he knew how to compensate himself for any lack he might suffer through his self-denying policy ; he was not above helping himself to the collection—if not directly, at any rate through his agents (xii. 16 f.). Ineffective, avaricious, cunning, a tyrant, a coward, a cheat—as such did his opponents choose to picture Paul ; and when

we see how venomous was their caricature, we can hardly be surprised at the indignant vehemence of his reply.

How very different is the real Paul! It is a dis-honour to human nature that such a man as he should ever have been accused of crooked dealing. Every one feels that his words palpitate with sincerity: they are spoken as in the sight of God (ii. 17, xii. 19), and he expects them to appeal to the unsophisticated conscience (iv. 2, v. 11). If he modifies or reverses a plan which he has formed, there is, we may be sure, a deep and satisfactory reason for the change: however capable his conduct may be of misconstruction, however liable to the charge of vacillation, his life, like his Master's, is marked by an unswerving inner consistency. He is not a man who has Yes and No upon his lips or in his heart at the same time; he is a man of honour and decision (i. 15-19). And of courage, too, in spite of the mean insinuations of his opponents. In spite of his manifold sufferings and sorrows, he does not lose heart: his sense of the glory of the dispensation of which he is a minister, and of the yet brighter glory that awaits him, bears him up. He claims to be always of good courage (v. 6, 8), and the varied and terrible dangers that he had faced without flinching for the gospel's sake would more than justify the most extravagant claims—dangers on land, on rivers, and on seas (xi. 25, 26). Only a man of almost superhuman devotion to the cause which he embraced would have voluntarily suffered for it hardships so numerous and terrible—hunger, thirst, cold, imprisonment, stripes, stoning, shipwreck (xi. 23 ff.), to say nothing of the continual exposure

to misunderstanding, treachery, and the subtler, but not less cruel, forms of persecution (cf. vi. 4 ff.). He can truthfully describe his life as a continual companying with death (iv. 10 f.). In another aspect, it is a warfare: with the mighty weapons of the spirit he fearlessly faces those "high things," in which both Hellenism and Judaism alike abounded, that are exalted against the knowledge of God, and leads them captive (x. 4 f.).

In all this high enterprise, he was sustained by a profound sense of his mission as "an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God" (i. 1). His God-given "line" was to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, to Syria, to Greece, and beyond Greece (x. 16) to the farthest western confines of the world (Rom. xv. 24). He moves from place to place on his triumphant missionary career (ii. 14), conscious that he has been enabled by the grace of God to be a competent minister of Christ (iii. 5 f.), and he sees the success of his work with a deep and humble satisfaction. "You are our epistle," he says to the Corinthians, "known and read of all men" (iii. 2); he needs and asks for no higher recommendation than that. He is proud of his Corinthian converts, he trusts them, he has not hesitated to boast about them (vii. 4, 14, ix. 3), and he is overjoyed when, by their exhibition of true Christian feeling and conduct on a critical occasion, they have shown to the world that he but spoke the truth (vii. 4, 14).

He is a man of the intensest sympathy. He shares the weakness of the weak, and burns with indignant shame when a brother is caught in the snare of sin (xi. 29). He loves his converts (xi. 11), he will most gladly spend and be spent for their souls

(xii. 15); and never was there a baser slander than when it was hinted that he had helped himself to money which they had collected for the poor (xii. 16 f.)—"it is not yours," he says, "but *you*, that I seek" (xii. 14). The wonderful delicacy of his mind comes out in the plea which he makes for a liberal collection for the poor of Judæa. Money is never once mentioned: The contribution he solicits is set in the bright light of Christian privilege (viii., ix.), its spiritual value is glorified as a subtle bond of union between distant churches (ix. 12-14), and Corinthian liberality is stimulated by being brought into comparison with the infinite condescension of Christ in exchanging for their sakes the heavenly riches for the poverty of an earthly career (viii. 9).

He speaks to his friends out of the fulness of his warm, open heart (vi. 11): but where the occasion demands it, he is a master of irony. Disappointed at the ease with which the Corinthians have allowed themselves to be imposed upon by his opponents, he ironically bespeaks an indulgent hearing for himself as, like a fool, he recounts his claims; their patience with his opponents shows that they tolerate fools with pleasure, and well they may, as they are so wise themselves! (xi. 16-19). He is a brave man, he admits elsewhere, but he has not the courage to compare himself with his opponents; in boasting he knows well that he is no match for them (x. 12 f.). He sarcastically suggests that he was perhaps guilty of a sin in accepting no remuneration from the Corinthians for his services as an evangelist (xi. 7), and asks them to forgive him this wrong (xii. 13).

It is clear from expressions like these that the tension between Paul and the Corinthian church must

in the recent past have been very great. Any resentment of his authority that may have been created by his peremptory order in the first epistle (ch. v.) regarding the incestuous man, would be deeply intensified by the Judaistic agitators, and this accounts for the large space devoted to them in the second epistle (x.-xiii.). He has, as with the Galatians, to assert vigorously and unambiguously that apostolic authority which had been conferred upon him by the Lord Himself, and whose ultimate object was the "edification," the up-building of the church (x. 8, xiii. 10). He had no alternative but to deal severely with his opponents, for the honour and the safety of the gospel were at stake. They were preaching another gospel (xi. 4) which was no gospel (cf. Gal. i. 6, 7); and the deep contrast between the two dispensations represented respectively by himself and them is ever present to his mind, and stings him into an assault upon all who would wantonly rob Christianity of its freedom and its glory (iii.). He speaks with plainness, with fearlessness, and with power, as a minister of the new covenant (iii. 6), and an ambassador on behalf of Christ (v. 20). The love of Christ constrains him (v. 14)—Christ who is the great incarnation and realization of the promises of God (i. 20), Christ who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor (viii. 9), Christ, the sinless One (v. 21) who died for all (v. 14), Christ, in whom the old things are passed away, and behold! they become new (v. 17), Christ, the Emancipator, the Redeemer, the Transformer, the glorious Lord (iii. 18). It is this sublime conception of Christ that explains at once the earnestness of Paul's propaganda, his solicitude for the churches

that were threatened by the insidious sophistries of the Judaistic agitators, and his uncompromising assault upon them.

The contrast must have been very remarkable between the physical weakness and the spiritual power of Paul. The precious treasure, as he said, was contained in an earthen vessel (iv. 7). Beaten and bruised as he had been by land and on the sea, worn down by his ceaseless anxiety for the churches he had founded (xi. 28), suffering from an incurable infirmity which impeded the progress of his work (xii. 7 ff.), he literally was dying daily, and often may even have looked, as has been suggested, like a dying man. Yet what a superb impression the epistle leaves upon us of spiritual power. He can accept with joy the refusal of an answer to one of the most deeply earnest prayers of his life, because his unremoved infirmity will give the more abundant scope to the operation of the grace of Christ within him (xii. 8-10). He enjoys unique spiritual experiences, in which the other world is as close and real to him as this, and the songs of Paradise are as vivid as the thorn that torments his flesh (xii. 1 ff.): but he is fully conscious of the special temptations to pride that accompany special gifts and experiences, and he has the grace to interpret his infirmity as a gift of God, sent to prevent him from being "exalted over-much" (xii. 7). He feels that though the outward man is decaying, the inward man is being renewed day by day (iv. 16), and he learns to face the prospect of his own death with quietness and confidence. Only a few months before he appears to have expected the coming of Christ during his own lifetime (1 Cor. xv. 51, cf. 1 Thes. iv. 17); but the terrible experience at Ephesus which had intervened

(2 Cor. i. 8), and possibly others, had convinced him of the high possibility of his own death before that coming. The keen disappointment which this conviction must at first have given him gradually melted before the thought that death would but usher him into the nearer presence of his Lord. In face of death, then, as of danger, he is always of good courage (v. 6, 8). He sees beyond the light affliction to the eternal weight of glory (iv. 17).

# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

## CHAPTER I

1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia :

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord

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### *The Greeting (i. 1, 2).*

1, 2. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus,—the assertion of his apostleship, though customary in the introduction (cf. 1 Cor. i. 1), was rendered peculiarly necessary by the disrespectful criticism of the Cor. (x. 10 f.)—through the will of God, and Timothy the brother, for whose reception by the Corinthians Paul had entertained reasonable fears (1 Cor. xvi. 10): this association of Timothy with himself has the incidental effect of honouring Timothy in the eyes of the Corinthians. Unto the church of God which exists at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 2), together with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaea : whether by *Achaea* Greece is meant (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 15) or merely the district in the neighbourhood of Corinth, the contents of the letter show that it is chiefly intended for the Corinthians. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. i. 1-3).

### *Paul's thanksgiving for the Divine Consolation in Distress (i. 3-11).*

3-5. The letter opens with the customary thanksgiving—this time, however, not for the condition and progress of his con-

Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the endur-

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verts (1 Cor. i. 4 ff.), which furnished little ground for gratitude, but for blessing bestowed upon himself. **Blessed is** (or *be*) **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (cf. Eph. i. 3), **the Father of compassions and God of all comfort**. This emotional beginning rises out of recent experiences of danger and sorrow which had given Paul a vivid revelation of God as a *compassionate* Father (Father of *repeated* compassions : pl.) and *Comforter*, one **who** continually (pres. ptc.) **comforts us** (himself and Timothy ; or perhaps here only himself) **in all our affliction** (not general, but definite, *τη̄*). But, as every spiritual experience that comes to Paul is for the benefit of the churches, this divine consolation is given that **WE** may be able to comfort those that are in any affliction through the comfort with which we on our part are comforted by God : the true comforter is he whose own sorrow has been divinely comforted. **For, as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us**, seeing that the Christian is united to his Lord, and must share his experience of sorrow (Mat. x. 24 f., John xv. 20, Col. i. 24) **so through Christ our comfort also abounds** : it is *through* Christ, mediated by Him to those in union with Him. The true Christian shares alike in the suffering and the consolation—in the one as surely as the other.

6, 7. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation—my experience enables me to comfort you (ver. 4), and this makes for your salvation ; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which shows itself effective (mid. not pass.) in the endurance of the same sufferings as we also suffer. Whatever the nature of the

ing of the same sufferings which we also suffer ; or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life :

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Corinthian sufferings may have been, they were, in a sense, the same as Paul's, as they were *sufferings of Christ*, which came to them through their union with Him. The sense of the divine consolation enables sufferers to *endure*. **And our hope for you is steadfast, knowing**, as we do, that, as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the comfort. In both experiences, there is a real communion of the saints. The received text on which the translation of A.V. in ver. 6 rests has no manuscript authority but rests on a conjecture of Erasmus. Some MSS. place the words "which shows itself effective, etc. : and our hope for you is steadfast," after the *comfort* (or *salvation*) in the first clause : others after the *comfort* in the second clause. R.V. (so Westcott and Hort), which follows the second alternative, seems preferable.

#### *The Distress and the Deliverance (i. 8-11).*

8, 9. The general reference to his sufferings Paul now makes more specific, though not so specific as we could have wished. He is anxious that the Corinthians should adequately realize how great his peril had been. **For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell in Asia.** Unhappily we have no means of knowing what this was—whether, as some suppose, a dangerous illness (but could that have been classed as one of the "sufferings of Christ," ver. 5 ?), or a shipwreck (cf. xi. 25), or some incident in the riot at Ephesus (Acts xix.). The narrative in Acts does not assert that Paul's life was in danger, but it is certain that he was the object

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;

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of malignant opposition and even persecution (1 Cor. xv. 32, xvi. 9), and it has been suggested with some probability that a plot had been formed against his life. In any case the situation into which he had been brought must have been very desperate, to have been described in such words as that **we**—though elsewhere he claims to be able to do *all* things in Christ (Phil. iv. 13)—were yet weighed down exceedingly beyond (our) power, with the result that **we**, whose motto was “Never despair” (iv. 8), actually despaired of life: nay, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves—we were as good as condemned to death. But man’s extremity is God’s opportunity: the divine object of this grim discipline was to drive Paul back upon a sense of his own impotence and the divine omnipotence; it was that **we might have no confidence in ourselves, but only in the omnipotent God who raises the dead**, and so can perform the lesser wonder of delivering him from *so deadly* a peril. The terrible experience had been a great spiritual gain (cf. xii. 7–10).

10, 11. This miraculous interposition of God in his behalf was the symbol of a mighty love which would further shield him from all future danger, being the love of a God who delivered us out of the jaws of (*ἐκ*) so great a death, and will in the future deliver (or *is delivering*, according to some MSS.: others omit the words altogether: before the following clause they seem somewhat superfluous), towards whom we have set our hope (pf.) (that) He will also still deliver us. Especially probable is this deliverance, as Paul is supported by Corinthian prayers—you also helping together on our behalf by your supplication, that, from many persons, thanks may be offered through many, on our behalf, for the divine favour of deliverance shown to us. This transla-

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

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tion is undoubtedly somewhat tautological ; but the order of the Greek words hardly supports the translation either of A.V. or R.V.—“the gift bestowed upon us by means of many (persons),” *i.e.* by means of their prayers—though this gives correctly enough the general sense, that the Corinthians pray for and will rejoice over the deliverance of Paul.

PAUL'S DEFENCE AGAINST  
CORINTHIAN CHARGES (i. 12–ii. 17)

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13 For we write none other things unto you, than

*His General Sincerity (i. 12–14).*

The intensely personal tone of the introductory verses of the Epistle is here heightened by the fact that certain insinuations and accusations on the part of the Corinthians have thrown Paul upon his defence. He had been accused of a time-serving insincerity in his correspondence and vacillation in his conduct, and he repudiates the charge with dignity and much feeling.

12. The *γὰρ* connects this paragraph closely with the last : he still looks to the Corinthians for the support of their prayers, *for all his life has upon it the stamp of transparent sincerity.* **For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience** —a conscience rendered specially sensitive by his relation to Christ (ver. 19)—*that in holiness* (the rare *ἀγιότητι* is more probable than *ἀπλότητι*, *simplicity*, singleness) **and sincerity before God** (lit. of God : either imparted by God, as a gift of His grace, cf. next clause ; or such as can stand in the presence of God) (*and*) **not in an atmosphere of worldly (lit. fleshly) wisdom, but in the grace of God**, the atmosphere in which Paul habitually lived, did we behave ourselves in the world with which his missionary activities had so extensively acquainted him, **but more especially in my relations to you**—because through his long stay in Corinth, the Corinthians had larger opportunities of witnessing his sincerity.

13, 14. **For we write nothing else to you but what ye read or even acknowledge**—in my letters to you there are

what ye read or acknowledge ; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end ;

14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit :

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judæa.

no studied ambiguities, the surface meaning is the true meaning. The word-play, common in Paul (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32, κρίνω, διακρίνω, κατακρίνω) upon ἀναγνώσκω and ἐπιγνώσκω, can hardly be reproduced in English. **And I hope that you will acknowledge to the end**, i.e., to the great day of Christ's appearing—as in point of fact you have acknowledged us in part—that we are your boast, and (he delicately adds) you ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus, the great day when He appears, and the truth about human character and motive will be finally and clearly revealed. Only a *good conscience* could contemplate so fearlessly the judgments of such a *day* (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 13). Some (*ἀπὸ μέρους*) of the Corinthians already acknowledge Paul's sincerity. They are proud of him, and he is proud of them (cf. vii. 14, ix. 2)—a tactful and generous acknowledgment, which shows how real was the communion between Paul and his converts. A.V. and R.V. punctuate differently, but the general sense is the same.

*Paul's Sincerity in Abandoning his Original Plan (i. 15-22).*

15, 16. After affirming the general sincerity of his life (*ἀνεστράφημεν*, ver. 12), Paul proceeds to establish his particular sincerity in changing his original plan to go direct from Ephesus to Corinth. He begins with fine irony : all his plans depend upon the assumption that they have *confidence* in his sincerity. **And in this confidence my original intention was to come to you direct before going to Macedonia** : instead of this, he

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay.

18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

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had gone first to Macedonia (1 Cor. xvi. 5), and would thus see Corinth only *once*, on his way south, whereas had he gone first to Corinth, he would have paid them a *double* visit at this time—on his way *to* as well as *from* Macedonia. This was his intention—in order that ye might have a second experience of the divine favour (*χάριν*, rather than *χαράν*, joy) which Paul's visits always signified to the churches. And after first visiting Corinth, his plan was by you to pass through into Macedonia, and again on my way back from Macedonia to come to you, and to be sent on my way by you to Judæa (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4).

17, 18. Paul's failure to carry out this plan led to all sorts of ungenerous misconstruction, which throws a lurid light on the suspicious mood of the Corinthians. He must, they argued, be a fickle man, guided in his plans by personal and worldly considerations. Paul repudiates the charge with solemn vehemence. In this intention of mine, then, surely I was not guilty of levity, was I? (aor. *ἐχρησάμην*). They had insinuated that this change of plan was only part of a general temporizing policy (pres., *βούλεύομαι*). Or are my plans dictated by worldly (fleshly, as opposed to spiritual) considerations, that there may be in the background of my mind the (*τὸ*) "Yes, yes," and the "No, no" of which you accuse me. Instead of generously assuming that he had an honourable reason for his change of plan, they accused him of being a Yes and No man, saying *yes* to-day and *no* to-morrow, according as it suited his *carnal* convenience. Paul is indignant at their unworthy suspicion, and solemnly repudiates the charge on oath. But, as God is faithful, our speech to you is not Yes and No. (The sentence has apparently the force of an oath, though the literal meaning is, "God is faithful in that our speech to you is not yes and no.") In Paul's words, there

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

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is no clever trimming, no indecision, compromise, or inconsistency ; they are yes *or* no, not yes *and* no.

19, 20. And the thought of the sincerity of his words in general leads him to the thought of the greatest of his words—his words as a preacher of Christ—and the inalienable obligation to complete sincerity which so exalted a theme involved. **For the Son of God** (*γὰρ* is put late, that *τοῦ Θεοῦ* may appear in the emphatic place : the obligation to sincerity is *divine*), even **Jesus Christ, who was preached among you through us**, not **through me** only, but through **Silvanus** (i.e. Silas, Acts xv. 22) and **Timothy** as well, who had preached with Paul at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5) and whose testimony therefore adds weight to Paul's, **was not Yes and No**—no vacillation or compromise in Jesus Christ—but in **Him is Yes** incarnate. Here the thought changes its complexion slightly : Paul thinks of Christ not as the great embodiment of an uncompromising “yes *or* no” principle, but as the great *Affirmation*, the permanent and everlasting *Yes*,—a daring and splendid thought, worked grandly out in relation to the past. Christ is the complete and eternal satisfaction of (Old Testament) aspiration, the fulfilment of (O.T.) promise and prophecy. **For of all the promises of God** made in the Old Testament (or elsewhere) the *Affirmation*, the **Yes**, the consummation and satisfaction, is in **Him** : all that God purposes to do is for ever (pf.) done in Christ : **wherefore also through Him** (not *and in Him*, as A.V. following some MSS.) is the responsive **Amen** (I Cor. xiv. 16) on the part of the church, **to the glory of God**, **through us** His ministers. Christ, the great *Affirmation*, is gratefully and believably appropriated by the church in her **Amen** ; in this response to and appropriation of Christ, **God is glorified** ; and on its human side, this wonderful result is mediated by *us*, through the preaching of the gospel ministers.

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is God*;

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

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**21, 22.** But, as in 1 Cor. iii. 23, xv. 24-28, the apostle passes, as it were, behind or beyond Christ, to God. His *steadfastness* of speech, and life is rooted in *God*. **Now He that evermore** (pres. ptc.) **establisheth us with you**—a beautiful recognition of his spiritual kinship with the Corinthians—**into** steadfast loyalty to **Christ, and anointed us** (like *Christ*, *xpιoς*), *i.e.* consecrated to our office, **is GOD**, who also sealed us for His own (mid.) in baptism, thus imprinting His image upon us, **and gave**, in connection with our baptism (Acts ii. 38, x. 38) **the pledge** which consists of **the spirit**, in our hearts, the first instalment, as it were, of the glorious inheritance which will be ours in the world to come.

The turn which the argument takes in this paragraph gives us a glimpse of the heights upon which Paul was habitually living. He is repelling a charge of insincerity; and he repels it by showing how impossible it is in one whose life was a convinced and unswerving service of Him who was the Truth itself. The minister of *Christ* surely cannot be insincere! And for a moment he loses sight of himself and his pain at the Corinthian suspicions in the contemplation of Christ as the everlasting Yea, the eternal affirmation and incarnation of all that pure hearts have hoped for, of all that God, by poets and prophets, has promised to do. He stands for all time as the finished realization of the divine purpose, as dreamt by or revealed to man; and God's glory is complete, when grateful humanity respond to Him with their loud Amen.

*Paul's Reason for Abandoning his Original Plan* (i. 23-ii. 4).

**23, 24.** Paul has rebutted the charge of insincerity or fickleness, nevertheless the fact remains that he had changed his plan. Leaving the larger thoughts into which his argument had

24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith,  
but are helpers of your joy ; for by faith ye stand.

## CHAPTER II

1 BUT I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.

2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ?

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led him, he now gives the specific reason for the change—it was essentially his affection for them. **But I for my part** (*ἐγώ*), whatever misconstructions you put upon my conduct, **call God over my soul to witness**—to take my life if I lie—that it was with the object of sparing you, that **I forbore to come to Corinth**. Under the deplorable circumstances, of which 1 Cor. gives us several glimpses, if he had come at the time determined by the original plan, it would have been with a rod (1 Cor. iv. 21), his visit would have given pain both to himself and them : to *spare* them, and give them time for amendment, he visits them later, on his way south from Macedonia. No sooner has Paul said this than he perceives that the touchy Corinthians may resent his explanation, as if it assumed that he claimed authority over their faith ; and he instantly guards against misunderstanding—for in the region of faith there must be independence. I do not mean that we are masters of your faith, I am no tyrant—far from it, our task is to help in furthering your joy (this is parenthetical)—for it is by faith that you stand. A less appropriate rendering is “ for in point of faith, you stand,” i.e. your position is unobjectionable.

ii. 1, 2. These verses furnish still more detail. **For I made up my own mind on this point, not again to come to you with (lit. in) sorrow**, either suffering or inflicting it. The order of the Greek words *again in sorrow* raises the presumption that a painful visit had already been paid. As his first visit to Corinth (Acts xviii.) could not be so described, it is difficult to find a place for this other implied visit. It

3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy of you all*.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

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was not necessarily in the interval between the first and second epistles, and it is therefore open to suppose that it fell before the first epistle (see Introduction). If, however, the order of the Greek words be not pressed, they might be rendered : “I determined not again to come to you—in sorrow” : i.e. he did not wish his *second* visit to be in sorrow. Two previous visits, however, seem to be implied by xii. 14, xiii. 1. In our ignorance of the situation, it is impossible to be dogmatic. The idea of *sorrow* is carried into ver. 2. **For if I** (*ἐγώ*) **make you** (*I* and *you* both emphatic) **sorry**, **then who is there to gladden** (lit. *that gladdens*) **me?** I have nobody but those whom **I must make sorry** (lit. *but him who is made sorry from me*)—probably a general, rather than a particular (1 Cor. v.) reference. Paul’s visit at this time can only cause pain.

3, 4. And I wrote this very thing, in order that, when I came, I should not have sorrow from those who ought to cause me joy, confident as I am in you all that my joy is *the joy of you all*—another fine acknowledgement of his intimate spiritual union with the Corinthians (cf. i. 21), with *all* of them, and not any one party. **For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you through many tears**—Paul was a man of rich emotional nature (Acts xx. 19)—not that ye might be made sorry, but that ye might know **THE LOVE** (*ἀγάπην* in emphatic position) which I have most abundantly towards you. What was “this very thing” which Paul wrote in the anguish of a *loving* heart with streaming *tears*? Some suppose the reference is to a letter which has not been preserved : possibly, however, the allusion is simply to 1 Cor. in whole, or in part. The *particular* reference in ver. 3 may be to his change of plan,

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

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announced in 1 Cor. xvi. 5: others, with more probability, suppose, to the passage dealing with the immoral person (1 Cor. v.) , which may well have been written with tears. But the letter as a whole, with its rebukes of Corinthian conceit, faction, lovelessness, scepticism (xv.), etc., answers at least tolerably well to the description in ver. 4. (See Introduction.)

*The Restoration of the Offender (ii. 5-11).*

5-7. The sorrow of ii. 1-4 reappears in this paragraph, but this time in more particular shape, though with much delicacy Paul refrains from definitely naming (*τις, ὁ τοιοῦτος*) the offender who had caused it. So general indeed is his allusion that it is disputed whether he was some one who had offered a personal insult to Paul (cf. ver. 9), or the incestuous person of 1 Cor. v. : the latter seems, on the whole, more probable, but the point is very uncertain (see Introduction). **But if any one has caused sorrow, it is not to me as an individual that he has caused it, but in part—not to be too hard upon him—to you all.** If Paul had described the sorrow as prostrating the whole church, the offender might have been “swallowed up by excess of sorrow”; so, *not to press* (upon him) *too heavily*, he qualifies his statement by *in part*. In point of fact, there appears to have been in this matter a minority opposed to Paul, perhaps mistaken champions of Christian “liberty,” who felt little or none of the general sorrow. **Sufficient** (a legal term, cf. Mark xv. 15, Acts xvii. 9) **to such a one** (cf. 1 Cor. v. 5) **is this penalty of excommunication (1 Cor. v. 13) inflicted by the majority**—clearly some were opposed to it—**so that you (should) no longer persist in abandoning him to his fate, but on the contrary, forgive and comfort (him), lest per-**

8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also : for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ ;

chance such a one (*ὅτιοῦτος* with pathetic effect at the end) be swallowed up (as completely as Death is swallowed up by the victory of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 54) by increasing sorrow—not “overmuch” (A.V., R.V.) but “abounding more and more,” till at last it brought him to despair. There was nothing vindictive, or even purely punitive, about the excommunication ; it had in view the good not only of the church, but of the offender himself (cf. 1 Cor. v. 5). It was to bring him to his right mind, to a true appreciation of the holiness he had violated. The excess of his grief at the attitude of the church speaks eloquently both for him and for it : the Christian conscience of Corinth was more sensitive than many passages of 1 Cor. would lead us to suppose.

8, 9. Paul is anxious to have the erring penitent reinstated. When the church disciplines her offenders, it must be with sorrow and with hope, the hope of their ultimate restoration. **Wherefore I entreat you to ratify** practically, and perhaps even by a formal decree, **your love towards him**—they are to show for him the *love* which Paul shows for them (*ἀγάπην*, ver. 4) : for this was the object of my letter (apparently 1 Cor. v.), to ascertain the proof of you, whether in all respects you are obedient. Considering the energy with which Paul deprecates the thought that he tyrannizes over the church (i. 24), it is just possible that *obedience* here is not that due to him, but to Christ.

10, 11. **But to whom you forgive anything, I forgive also.** These words apply to the specific situation ; they are hardly here the statement of a general principle. Paul was one with the church in her sorrow, and he would be one with her in her forgiveness of the sinner. He almost speaks here

11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us :  
for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach*  
Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of  
the Lord,

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as if he but followed the church's lead. Though he speaks with apostolic authority, he recognizes and even encourages the authority of the church, *entreating* them to reinstate the erring brother. **For what I on my part** (*ἐγώ*) **have forgiven** (his forgiveness is a settled fact : *perf.*), if indeed **I have forgiven anything**—he makes light of his forgiveness, it is not the principal thing—it is **for your sakes** that (**I have forgiven it**) (*i.e.* for the sake of the unity and welfare of the church). Nor is the forgiveness due to a gust of sentimental compassion : it is a complete and solemn restoration made **in the presence of Christ** and witnessed by Him. This seems distinctly preferable to A.V., and Am.R.V. (marg.) “in the *person* of Christ,” *i.e.* as His delegate. The ultimate reason for the forgiveness is **that no advantage be gained over us by Satan** (cf. 1 Cor. v. 5), as would be gained if the sinner's excessive grief drove him to despair : that would be the church's loss and the Adversary's *gain*. **For of HIS devices**, to ruin souls and rob the church, **we are not ignorant**. (There is a word-play here hard to reproduce, “of his *knowing* devices we are not *unknowing*”). Christians who have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. ii. 16) have a keen eye for the wiles of the adversary of Christ.

*Paul's Thanksgiving at the Good News from Corinth (ii. 12-17).*

12, 13. After the digression on the sorrow occasioned by the sinner, Paul resumes the story of his plans to visit Corinth (i. 23 f.). **Now when I came to Troas** on my way to Corinth viâ Macedonia, **for the preaching of the gospel of Christ**, and a door (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 9), an opportunity for preaching, **was open to me in the Lord**, the sphere of all Paul's activity—a door through which he would otherwise gladly have entered—I **had no rest for my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother**. He expects Titus with

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always

news from Corinth : but, so excited is he by the failure of Titus to appear that, great missionary and preacher as he is, he has to abandon an excellent opportunity for preaching at Troas, and pushes on in the hope of meeting Titus : a fine testimony to his solicitude for the Corinthians: I bade them good-bye, and went out of Asia into Europe, Macedonia.

**14. Now to God be thanks.** Nothing could be more abrupt or startling than this joyful cry which breaks, unmediated and unexplained, into a narrative of travel—the more startling as it immediately follows a confession of anxiety and unrest. As Paul writes, the whole scene flashes again upon him, and his soul kindles with the memory of it—of how, with beating heart, he had longed for a sight of Titus ; how finally he had come with the best of good news from Corinth, news which comforted, reassured and rejoiced him. The story is told in vii. 5 f. : but at the moment Paul is not thinking so much of the meeting itself, and the news Titus brought, as of the overwhelming evidence it furnished of the irresistible power of the gospel, and of his own success, under God, as its minister. Hence *thanks be to God who always and everywhere (in every place* comes at the end of the *second* participial clause : but the effect of its emphatic position is perhaps best rendered as above) **leads us in triumph in Christ.** The meaning of θριαμβεῖν is, in this context, a little difficult to fix. On the analogy of μαθητεῦν, “to make a disciple” (Mat. xxviii. 19), it might mean “to cause to triumph” ; and this fits in admirably with the sense. Paul is restless and anxious, yet now (as the sequel shows) and *ever*, the victory is his. This is the view taken by A.V. “Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph.” The seeming defeat is transformed into a victory. The word θριαμβεῖν, however, happens also to occur in Col. ii. 15, where its meaning is, beyond dispute, to “triumph over.” In a doubtful passage, the proved meaning of a word ought always to be given a fair trial : is this meaning, then, possible here ? “Thanks be unto God, who *triumphs over us*,

causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

or *leads us in triumph*," as a Roman general his captives. The first impression is that this thought at this point, is somewhat irrelevant ; this would draw attention to Paul as the captive, whereas is he not thinking of himself as victor—of *his own* triumph, amid seeming defeat? True : but nothing is commoner in Paul than unexpected turns of thought (cf. i. 17–19), and, retaining the proved meaning of the verb, a subtle, but altogether relevant thought emerges. He is, humanly speaking, the victor ; but the real Victor is the power by which he is driven, the God by whom He is inspired ( $\omega\varsigma \epsilon k \Theta e o v$ , ver. 17). Paul, the evangelist, like Amos the prophet (Amos iii. 8), is swept along by this irresistible power ; it is no more he that speaks, but the spirit that speaks in him. His victory is God's victory : he conquers men because God has conquered him. As the triumphal procession of the gospel moves about the world, Paul moves with it as the prisoner of God. That is the wonderful setting which Paul gives to his missionary journeys ; and such a striking and original turn of thought is altogether worthy of him. He moves as a missionary, often lonely, misunderstood, persecuted, from place to place ; he seems often to meet with disappointment and defeat. But in him the gospel is marching on to ever fresh conquests ; he has the eyes to see it as a triumphal procession, with the invisible God as the conquering general, and himself as a glad captive. But this captive shares the General's triumph, he *triumphs* indeed in Him. This meaning has much the same issue as the other, but it is far more characteristic of the daring mind of Paul. God leads Paul in triumph *in Christ*—the triumph of God is effected through Christ ; outside of Him there is no divine triumph, but only *in Him*.

The metaphor of the triumphal procession is probably maintained in the second clause, though it seems to change. *He leads us in triumph and manifests the savour of His knowledge through us* (in every place). These words sound foreign to our ears, but they conveyed a brilliant and suggestive picture to the readers of Paul. The reference appears to be to

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish :

16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things ?

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the clouds of incense which rose from a multitude of altars as the triumphal procession moved on its way. The gospel procession has also its incense : wherever it goes, the air is redolent with *the knowledge of Him*, whether by Him we are to understand Christ (cf. ver. 15) or God—two possibilities which blend in the idea that the knowledge of God comes through Christ. This savour is manifested *through us* and *wherever we go* : the presence of Paul and of Christians as devoted as he, is the simplest thing in the world to detect. They bear about with them an atmosphere ; everywhere they go, the air is fragrant with Christ ; and when we are near them, we feel sure that the gospel procession is moving on, that the Power which is victorious in them is advancing to fresh victories through them.

**15-16.** There is here a gentle, but almost imperceptible transition of thought. In ver. 14 the *knowledge* was the savour : here it is the apostle himself, and those who, like him, preach the word in sincerity (ver. 17). The neutral word *savour* (*στρογήν*) here becomes *sweet savour* (*ειωδία*), which again is naturally replaced (before *death*, ver. 16) by the neutral word. **For** in the eyes of God, **to God, we are a sweet savour of Christ** ; that is, they are redolent of Christ, and God is well pleased with them. God, but not all men—only some ; there are some whom it repels. This fragrant influence operates *among*, or **in them that are being saved and in them that are perishing** (for the contrast, cf. 1 Cor. i. 18). In both cases the apostolic preacher is a *sweet savour to God*. Men decide their inner quality and therefore their *destiny*, by their attitude to the gospel and to the men from whose life streams the fragrance of Christ : **to the one it is a savour of life unto life, to the other a savour of death unto death.** These phrases again sound remote to us ; and to complicate the case, the text is

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

uncertain, some MSS. reading the simple genitive (*savour of life, of death*), others adding *ἐκ* (*savour from life*). If the preposition *ἐκ* be taken at its full value, it is hard to explain. One can see how for the two great groups of men (*μέν . . . δέ*) the savour *issues in* (*εἰς*) life and death, has these for its goal: one can also see how the savour might be said to *originate in* (*ἐκ*) life, but how could it also originate in death? Unless these be general phrases for *altogether vital, and altogether deadly*, it seems better to read the simple genitive, “*a savour of life unto life*,” *i.e.* whose element is life and whose issue is life, as opposed to the savour with death for its element and death for its end. The phrase suggests the fearful contrast between the destinies of men, according as they accept or reject the gospel. Despite its “*fragrance*” and beauty, it does not absolutely compel: it can be resisted, though the end of resistance is death.

17. **And for these things**, asks Paul—for a ministry with responsibilities and issues so awful, nothing less than life and death—**who is sufficient?** *We are*, is the implied answer—though not indeed of ourselves, our sufficiency is from God (iii. 5). **For we do all our evangelic work in sincerity**, and as *in the presence of God Himself*; **we are not as the many** (*οἱ πολλοὶ*: some MSS. read *οἱ λοιποὶ, the rest*) **who adulterate the word of God** for their own profit, as a tavern-keeper adulterates his wine, **but as out of a heart of transparent sincerity**, yes, as under prompting from God and *in the presence of God we speak in Christ*, *i.e.* in fellowship with Him: our speech moves within the sphere determined by our relation to Him. *καπηλεύω* is to act like a small shop-keeper, to sell retail, then to make a profit by adulterating one’s wares. In this word he appears to be glancing at his Judaistic opponents, judging by the discussion of the Mosaic dispensation which immediately follows (iii.).

This sentence furnishes a suggestive description of the ideal preacher. The only man who is *sufficient* for the ministry of Jesus Christ is one who refuses to *dilute* the gospel he proclaims,

but who proclaims it in its entirety with candour and *sincerity*. Behind him is God, and it is in His *inspiration* (*ēk*) that he speaks. He carries about with him a high and purifying sense of responsibility, for he never allows himself to forget that his work is being witnessed by the unseen God, that it is done *in His presence*: and Christ is the atmosphere, as he is the theme, of all his proclamation.

There are few things more wonderful in Paul than the mighty emotion by which his soul was swept as he contemplated certain simple facts. He meets Titus and hears from him good news of Corinth; and, without even waiting to tell us that he met him, he bursts into a hymn of jubilation. This was because he saw through the fact to the God whose triumph in the world it illustrated. Paul had all the old Hebrew genius for detecting the spiritual significance of historic fact. He can read his experience, and he rejoices with joy unspeakable, because he finds God there. To his enlightened eyes, his checkered missionary career is in reality an unbroken triumph of God, always and everywhere.

The preacher or the missionary, whose heart was sustained by the vision that Paul saw, could go on, amid weakness and disappointment, from strength to strength, hoping and daring the bravest things. Paul's own travels from point to point throughout the world, preaching here, founding a church there, he interpreted as the triumphal procession of the gospel and of the God whose captive he was. Here and there men were won for Jesus, a church of God existed even in immoral Corinth (1 Cor. i. 2, 2 Cor. i. 1), and that church, by the news Titus brought, had clearly caught something of the spirit of Jesus, and was growing into His likeness. In all this Paul read the triumph of the gospel, of Christ, of God; and, in his splendid paradox, he, their captive, shared their victory.

Suggestive, too, is his comparison of the influence exerted by the servants of Christ to a savour. It is true of all His servants no less than of the preacher. Wherever they are, there should be fragrance—pervasive, undeniable, irresistible. A Christian without this redolence is as impossible as incense whose presence is unfelt by those who come near it. It penetrates the atmosphere and compels attention: so must it be with those who are in Christ. United with Him, and secure in Him, they must also be redolent of Him—so plainly and unmistakably that

their presence is, as it were, a perpetual challenge to their environment, repelling some, attracting others. They constitute a living standard, which compels men involuntarily to expose the inner quality of their life. It is the manner of their attitude and response to that "sweet savour of Christ" which streams from His servants, that determines whether men are "among those that are being saved" or "among those that are perishing."

## THE GLORY OF THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE (iii. 1-vi. 10)

### CHAPTER III

i Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

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*The Corinthians are Paul's Living Letter of Recommendation*  
(iii. 1-3).

The tone of triumphant confidence with which the apostle had closed the last paragraph (ii. 14-17), reminds him of the challenge which it is sure to call forth from his opponents, who have a keen scent for anything that looks like self-commendation on the part of the apostle; and this leads him to launch into his great defence of the glory of the apostolic office. As "an apostle of Christ Jesus" (i. 1), he is the minister of a *new* dispensation, whose intrinsic glory is greatly heightened by comparison with the old Mosaic dispensation. The glory of the one is swallowed up in the exceeding glory of the other, and Paul writes with the insight of one who understood both dispensations thoroughly—for he had been a faithful and zealous servant of both—and with the enthusiasm of one who had found peace, joy, and finality in the new spiritual order created by Jesus Christ. The peculiar point of the comparison depends on the circumstance that the opponents he is here combating, belong to the Jewish party (cf. xi. 22).

i. Are we beginning—in the preceding verse (ii. 17) he had laid himself open to this charge, and he continues in ver. 6, where he declares that he is a competent minister of the new covenant—again to commend ourselves?—apparently a favourite charge against the apostle, to which some expressions in 1 Cor. (cf. ix. 15, xiv. 18, xv. 10) lent

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men :

3 *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not

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a colourable excuse, hence *again*. But his opponents had altogether misunderstood the tone of these references ; no one knew better than Paul that “not he that commendeth himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth.” He does not need to commend himself, for he has the approval of the Lord : it is “writ large” in the success of his ministry at Corinth. For the same reason he needs no commendation from them : the very existence of the Corinthian church, which owes its origin to him, was commendation enough (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 2). **Or do we need, as some do—a glance probably at his opponents (ii. 17)—letters of recommendation to you?** Surely not : *they* have good reason to know him well ; but for him, would there have been a Corinthian church at all ? If to others he was not an apostle, at any rate he was to them ; they were the seal of his apostleship (1 Cor. ix. 2). Letters of recommendation were frequently given Christians to the church of the district to which they were going : such a letter was given Apollos when he left Ephesus for Corinth (Acts xviii. 27). Paul’s opponents had probably brought such letters from the Jerusalem church. **Or do we need letters of recommendation from you ?** As little as he needed letters of recommendation *to* them, did he need such letters *from* them to others. The credentials which he could everywhere present with confidence were the Corinthians themselves and his well-known success among them.

**2, 3. YE are our letter** of commendation, a more convincing testimonial than any written with ink on paper : when I am asked for my credentials, I point to you, *living* epistles. This testimonial is open for the inspection of all the world, *known and read by all men*, but it is also **written in our hearts.** The figure suggested by the “letter” is not worked out with strict consistency : at one time it is written upon Paul’s heart, at another by Christ (ver. 3) upon the hearts of the Corinthians themselves (ver. 3). But the meaning is perfectly clear. Paul bears about with him, graven upon

with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

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his heart, the memory of his fruitful ministry at Corinth—a ministry which was at once a consolation to himself, and a testimony to the world ; for the Corinthian converts were an epistle, known and read (*γνωστοκομένη καὶ ἀναγνωστοκομένη*) ; for a similar word-play, cf. i. 13) by all men—the founding and the progress of the church in immoral Corinth would be a matter of wide, almost *universal* interest. The testimony borne by the Corinthian church is *plain* (*φανερούμενοι*) : Paul speaks of its members as manifestly being an epistle of Christ, *i.e.* written by Christ, ministered by us. The human amanuensis of this living epistle was Paul, but the real author of it was Christ. The transformation in Corinthian character was effected by the *ministry* of Paul, but he was the minister of Christ : he wrote but as he was prompted by Christ. And this letter was written not, like ordinary human testimonials, with ink : such were the letters of recommendation brought by Paul's opponents from Jerusalem, written with *ink* upon paper, and of themselves impotent to prove anything. Not such were Paul's credentials, but written with the spirit of the living God : this letter was convincing, because behind it was *spirit*, power, *life*, God. The man who was in possession of such a letter of commendation needed no documentary attestation from anybody, he was attested by the mighty spiritual results that accompanied and followed his ministry. The letter to which he appealed was convincing because of the material upon which, as well as the instrument by which, it was written : for it was written not upon paper or tablets of stone, but upon the impossibly fleshy tablets of the heart. The letters that carry real persuasion or conviction must be written there. In this connection the *stone tablets* come as a surprise, as the context is dealing with letters written with *ink* and necessarily upon a very different surface ; but Paul is preparing the way here for the great contrast, which he is about to elaborate, between the Mosaic dispensation, represented by the tablets of stone, and the Christian dispensation, whose impulse

4 And such trust have we through Christ to Godward :

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think

and atmosphere is the spirit. The contrast had already been suggested in the great prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi. 31-34) who, realizing the inadequacy of the older dispensation, comforted his heart with the vision of a day when the law would be no more a series of external ordinances, but an inward thing written upon the heart.

The most convincing proof of a man's competence in any sphere is the work he has done. Written statements, whether drawn up by himself or by others, regarding his power, must be ultimately referred to that practical test, which is both fair and final ; his worth is best attested not in *ink*, but in experience. Paul was not afraid of this test. He had changed the face of the world, and he needed no "certificate" from any man. The men whom his ministry had transformed were his credentials.

But letters are written to be read, and a Christian epistle is no exception. The Corinthians were Paul's living epistle, and they were *continually being read* (pres. ptc.) *by all men*. The church is the letter, and the world is the reader. And herein lies an obligation which the church as a whole, and Christian men in particular, can never afford to forget. They *are being read* : they must see to it, therefore, that the thing that is being daily, scrupulously, read is worth reading,—that it is in truth an *epistle of Christ*, an epistle which He would not be ashamed to own.

#### *A Competent Minister* (iii. 4-6).

The confident tone (*πεποιθησις*) which ran throughout the last paragraph Paul now proceeds to explain and justify. His competence as an evangelist is undeniable, it is written in unmistakable characters in the success of his work ; but, though it is his own (*ἡ ικανότης ἡμῶν*) it is not his own, its source is in God (*ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*) ; and therefore, though his success is frankly asserted and even insisted upon, boasting is excluded.

**4-6. And such confidence** in his apostolic success as animated the last paragraph **we have**, not through any innate power of our own, but **through Christ**, and **in relation to God**.

any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency *is* of God.

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

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It is *God* who has made Paul competent and successful (vv. 5, 6), and his confidence therefore takes a God-ward direction. Paul has always to fear malicious misconstructions of such assertions, therefore he adds at once : I do not mean **that of ourselves we are competent to form any judgment as from ourselves.** *ἐκ* (*out of* ourselves) indicates the origin even more distinctly than *ἀπό* (*from*) : both together suggest how utterly Paul disclaims the competence, on the basis of his own native resources, to reach decisions, to devise ways and means, affecting his apostolic activity. **But**, on the contrary, **our competence**, which is a real and undoubted fact, **is from God** : it is indeed mine, but *He* is its source : **for it is He who**, at our conversion once for all (*ικάνωσεν*, aor.) **made us competent to be ministers of the NEW covenant.** To appreciate the real force of the passage, we must remember that the opponents whom Paul has here specially in view, are Judaizers (xi. 22) who championed the *old* Mosaic covenant. With Jesus, a *new* order, constitution, covenant, came into the world : no one apprehended more clearly or forcibly than Paul the tremendous, the infinite difference that Jesus made to history (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 22). And as he thinks of this difference, brief sharp words leap from his pen, that cut right into the heart of the contrast, and lay it bare. In being *enabled* to be a minister of this *new* covenant, he becomes a minister **not of the letter, but of the spirit.** Here is the first startling antithesis : *letter* and *spirit*. We commonly use these words to suggest the difference between an interpretation which looks to the bare words and one which looks rather to their intention : this, however, is not the meaning of the passage here. The *letter* has been suggested to Paul by the reference to the stone tablets (ver. 3), or rather perhaps that reference had in view the contrast, which Paul is here beginning to develop, between the two dispensations. In either case, the letter is the *law*, which found its most characteristic expression in the commandments (or rather *prohibitions*, for the most part)

7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children

graven upon the tablets of stone : while, in contrast with this, is the *spirit*, the source of that new order or constitution of things, which was established by and in Jesus Christ. The contrast is not between word and intention, but between law and gospel, between Moses and Christ, between laws imposed from without, and spirit operating freely (ver. 17) and spontaneously from within (cf. Rom. vii. 6, ii. 29).

God did not make Paul a minister of the letter, but of the spirit, for the reason that **the letter** (*i.e.* *the law*) *killeth*, while **the spirit maketh alive**. The difference between law and gospel is nothing less than the difference between *life* and *death*. The contrast is, for the purposes of the argument, made as absolute as it can be made, and more absolute than Paul has made it in other passages, *e.g.* in Rom. vii. 14, where the law is even described as *spiritual* (*πνευματικός*). In one aspect, the law is holy (Rom. vii. 12), and even glorious (2 Cor. iii. 9-11); but, on the whole, its work was negative. It imposed a command to which men were not equal, it virtually therefore *condemned* them (ver. 9)—condemned them to *death*. As men could only disobey the law, and life lay alone in obedience, the law could only lead to death (cf. Rom. vii. 9-11). In this sense, therefore, *the letter kills*. But *the spirit*—not simply a vague contrast with the letter, but the definite spirit of the Lord Jesus (ver. 17)—*maketh alive*. The soul that was *slain*—shut up to despair and *death*—by the law, is quickened into *life* when touched by the *spirit* of Jesus. These words are a vivid summary of Paul's experience under the two dispensations, both of which he knew so well.

*The Greater Glory of the New Dispensation* (iii. 7-11).

Paul has been drawn, by his defence of himself as a competent minister of the gospel, into a comparison of the two dispensations. This comparison he now elaborates, admitting the glory of the older dispensation, but insisting upon the more exceeding glory of that of which he is now minister.

7, 8. But if the ministration of death (that is, the law—of which Moses was *minister*—whose issue was *death*, for it *kills*,

of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance ; which *glory* was to be done away ;

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious ?

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ver. 6), which consisted in *letters*, and was engraved on *stones*, was constituted in *glory*, a glory which, as the context suggests, found symbolic expression upon the shining face of Moses, and which was yet so striking that, for fear (cf. Exod. xxxiv. 30), the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, though that was a glory which, even as they gazed, was passing away (for *καταργουμένην*, cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 8, 10) :—if the ministry of *death* was so glorious, surely still more will the ministration of the **SPIRIT** be in *glory*. For the spirit giveth *life* (ver. 6) ; and as stupendous as is the difference between life and death, so stupendous is the difference between the glory of the one covenant and that of the other. The phrase *ἐν γράμμασιν*, applied to the “ministration of death,” means much more than *written* (cf. A.V., and R.V. text) : it is intended to recall the *γράμμα* (letter) of the preceding verse (as in R.V. marg. *in letters*). The old covenant consisted of lifeless, isolated *letters*, carved on stone : the new is a life-giving *spirit*. The old was made (*ἐγενήθη*) in *glory*, its *inception* was glorious—witness the face of Moses : the new shall be (*ἐσται*) in *glory*, *glory* is its *permanent* element. The use of the future tense is not intended to suggest that the *glory* of the new dispensation is a thing of the future—to be revealed, for example, at the coming of Christ : it is the future of argument, and is equal to, “*It follows that* the ministration of the spirit *is* more glorious.” The *glory* is already here, since Christ has come, and especially since He has risen : Paul kindles at the contemplation of it. Throughout this section, the words “ministration” and “glory,” though they primarily refer to experiences of Moses, insensibly glide into a larger meaning, and practically suggest the whole range of the older dispensation. The sense in which the *glory* upon the face of Moses was transient, becomes more plain in ver. 13.

9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

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9. The new dispensation *must* be *far more* glorious than the old: for if the ministration of condemnation—the law which condemned to death (ver. 7)—(was) glory, the ministration of justification (lit. *righteousness*) is necessarily far more abundant in glory: the one transcends the other as much as justification transcends condemnation. (If the reading  $\tau\bar{\eta}$  διακονία, instead of ή διακονία, be accepted, the meaning will be, “If the ministration of condemnation *had* glory.”) The other is more striking and emphatic.) The new dispensation, and by implication its *ministers* (like Paul) are superior to the old, for by acceptance of the gospel, a man, instead of being condemned, becomes “righteous, justified, acquitted,” before God (cf. Rom. iii. 22 ff.). This verse practically repeats the thought of vv. 7, 8, but characterizes the two dispensations by fresh, incisive, names.

10, 11. In the exuberance of his enthusiasm for the new dispensation, the apostle almost seems in this verse to deny to the old the glory which he had already conceded to it. It had a glory of its own, but its glory is as nothing in comparison with the exceeding glory of the other. For indeed that old dispensation glorious as it is, has no real glory in comparison with the surpassing glory of the other (lit. *in this respect, on account of the surpassing glory*, the latter phrase defining the former). For if the passing, the transient, was accompanied by glory, much more is (not shall be: see note on ver. 8) the permanent established in glory. The prepositions διὰ and ἐν appear here to be intentionally used to suggest respectively the temporary glory of the one dispensation, and the inherent and abiding glory of the other. The Mosaic dispensation transitory, yet not without

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech :

13 And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished :

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glory : the Christian dispensation eternal, therefore essentially far more glorious.

A paragraph like this enables us to see how profoundly, how overwhelmingly, Paul was impressed by the consciousness of the difference that Jesus had made. He gave a *new* (ver. 6) turn to the spiritual history of the race, so that the world of religious possibility and reality after Him (and of course *in* Him) was different from, and far more glorious than, the world which had preceded Him. He speaks of its *surpassing glory* (ver. 10)—it is *more* glorious (ver. 8), twice he calls it *far more* ( $\pi\omega\lambda\lambda\tilde{\varphi}$  μᾶλλον) glorious. And it is so, because, while the law was bound up with ideas of condemnation and death (vv. 9, 7), the gospel was a message of acquittal and life. Whatever the future might have in store, life in Christ, and especially life as a preacher of the gospel, was even here and now glorious : it was glorious to be free from *condemnation* (ver. 9), glorious to be secure against *death* (ver. 7). This assuredly was the life indeed.

It would be a happy day for the church and for the world, if those who name the name of Christ were stirred, as Paul was, by the thought of the glorious world into which Christ has ushered them. Our escape to Christ is not, as was Paul's, from the burden of the Jewish law : our servitude is, in form, different from his. But in spirit it is much the same. We, like him, are in bondage to the transient, to *that which is passing away* (ver. 11) : Christ brings us, if we let Him, into the eternal order ( $\tau\delta$  μένον). And the man who stands within that order, serene and secure, may well feel that he is already living in a world of “*surpassing glory*.”

*The Veil Removed (iii. 12-18).*

12, 13. The two dispensations are still further contrasted, this time with special emphasis upon the frankness and freedom characteristic of those who are “*in Christ*.” Paul appears to

14 But their minds were blinded : for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament ; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the *vail* is upon their heart.

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have been accused of obscuring the gospel (cf. iv. 3) ; no accusation, he hints, could be wider of the mark. Openness is the genius of the new dispensation ; and, having nothing to conceal, he can speak plainly and even boldly. Having, then, such a hope of abiding glory (ver. 11), we adopt great boldness of speech towards all with whom our ministry brings us into contact—he can afford to be, and is even bound to be, frank. And we do not put a *veil* upon our face, as Moses put a *veil* upon his face (Exod. xxxiv. 33), to keep the children of Israel from looking steadfastly upon the end of that which was passing away. The narrative in Exodus (xxxiv. 29-35) assigns no reason for the action of Moses in putting a *veil* on his face ; the reason here assigned by Paul is peculiar, and, as Professor Denney (*Expositor's Bible*, 2 Cor. p. 129) says, perhaps not to be taken too seriously. According to Exodus, Moses appeared without the *veil* before Jehovah and before the people, while he was delivering Jehovah's message to them : when the message had been delivered, he put the *veil* on (a point misrepresented in A.V. which in ver. 33 wrongly reads *till* for *when*). And, as the delivery of the divine message was accompanied by the shining face, Paul infers from the donning of the *veil* immediately afterwards, that the glory began thereafter gradually to vanish, and that the *veil* was to hide its evanescence. The real point of the passage, however, is, in any case, not the intention of Moses, but the transience of the glory, and the inability of the Israelites to recognize this transience. The vanishing glory was symbolic of the transient dispensation. Israel did not see this, but because of the *veil*, thought of it as permanent ; their understandings were hardened.

14, 15. For up to the present day, at the reading of the old covenant—Paul is thinking chiefly of the law (cf. Moses in

16 Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

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ver. 15), but the application to prophecy is quite legitimate (cf. i. 20)—**the same veil** (not, of course, Moses' veil, but the veil of their inability to recognize the temporary nature of the Mosaic dispensation) **remains unlifted** (for only in Christ is it **done away**), **but till to-day, whenever Moses** (the law, the Pentateuch) **is read, a veil lies upon their heart.** There is the same slight change in the *veil*-metaphor, as there was in the *epistle* of vv. 2, 3: the veil, once on the face of Moses, is now on their heart. The transitory nature of the old covenant is hidden from them as it was from their fathers; but the implication is that they are more culpable—the veil is *on their heart*, and it lies with them to repent and return (ver. 16). Considerable difficulty attaches to the construction of  $\mu\ddot{\imath}$  ἀνακαλυπτόμενον in ver. 14. R.V. (marg.) takes it as an accus. absolute,—“*it not being revealed* (to them) that it is done away in Christ.” But besides the comparative infrequency of this participial construction, it would seem much more natural to take the word with its cognate κάλυψα earlier in the sentence, and thus to assign to it the concrete sense which it has in ver. 18 ( $\alpha\acute{n}a\kappa\epsilon\kappa\alpha\lambda\nu\mu\acute{m}\acute{e}\nu\varphi$  προσώπῳ, with *unveiled* face). A.V. is probably therefore right in translating “*the veil remaineth untaken away*,” though apparently wrong in rendering “*which (veil) is done away in Christ*,” as δ, τι is not equivalent to δ. On any view of the verse, however, the great utterance remains that “*the veil (or the old covenant) is done away in Christ*.” His appearance at once fulfils and abolishes the old covenant; it is abolished at least for those *in Him*. This leads to the thought of ver. 16.

16. **But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, away the veil is taken**—the present is graphically used for the future, and the verb ( $\pi\acute{e}\rho\iota\alpha\rho\iota\epsilon\tau\alpha$ ) put first for emphasis, though on the latter point too much stress ought not to be laid, as the words are practically a quotation from Exod. xxxiv. 34. There the reference is to Moses, here it must be wider—whether to the *heart*, upon which the veil lies, or to *Israel*, collectively (cf. Rom. xi. 12) or individually ( $\tau\iota\varsigma$ , one). In any case, to *turn to the Lord*, by whom Paul must here mean Christ, is to have the

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a

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veil removed and to behold the exceeding glory of His finished and abiding work, which not only transcends, but supersedes the dispensation that had gone before.

17. Paul had spoken earlier of the new dispensation as the dispensation of *the spirit* (ver. 8) : men enter into by turning to *the Lord* (ver. 16). Between the spirit and the Lord there must therefore be an intimate connection : they are indeed to be distinguished (xiii. 14), but Paul asserts here a practical identity—**now the Lord is the spirit.** The spirit which animated believers, and brought forth in them its marvellous fruits (Gal. v. 22) was the *Lord's* spirit : the particular characteristic of it which Paul here selects, is its *freedom—and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* of all kinds : freedom, as we have seen, from condemnation and death (vv. 6, 8), freedom from the literal and statutory temper created by the old covenant, deliverance into the untrammelled life of the spirit. Here, more particularly, it is the spirit of the man whose vision is not obscured by any veil,—who gazes *with open face* (ver. 18) and who declares frankly and fearlessly what he sees (ver. 12).

18. **But we all**—not preachers alone but all Christians—unlike the Jews (ver. 15) with face unveiled, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed while we gaze (pres. ptc.) into the same image, from glory to glory. The gospel is the *mirror* in which the glory of Christ is reflected. The word *κατοπτριζόμενοι* has been the subject of much dispute : the two possible meanings are given in R.V., margin and text respectively—*beholding* and *reflecting* (as in a mirror). The active voice means “to show in a mirror,” and the precise force of the middle must be determined by the context. This seems undoubtedly to favour the rendering “*beholding*.” The Jews had looked, but had not seen the glory ; a veil had hidden it from them—for the earlier Jews, the veil on Moses’ face, and, for the latter, the veil upon their own hearts. But the veil is done away in Christ (ver. 14). *We* Christians look upon the Lord, and we really see His glory, for there is no

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

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veil upon *our* hearts. There is no veil upon Christ's face, nor is there any upon ours : "we behold *with face unveiled* the glory of the Lord." *Behold* fits the passage admirably, and brings out the thought of *liberty* in ver. 17 much more forcibly than *reflecting* would do : it happily expresses the frank, clear gaze at the glorious reality. What is meant by *the glory of the Lord* must be gathered from the context. His glory is in part revealed by bringing men out of a state of condemnation and death into acquittal and life, but it is a more comprehensive thing than that. He is altogether glorious, and His crowning glory is His resurrection (1 Cor. xv.). It is the glory of the risen and triumphant Lord upon which the Christian gazes, and as he gazes, he is *transformed into the same image* and becomes like his risen Lord. As the process is a gradual one, *from glory to glory* (and this is also suggested by the present tenses, *as we behold, we are being transformed*), the reference is essentially to a transformation of character. The glory is an inward glory, just as Christ's glory, however striking might be its external manifestation at His second coming, was essentially His triumphant work. We are transformed *from glory to glory*, from one glory to another and a higher, until we reach the highest (1 Cor. xv. 51-54). This gradual and glorious transformation is just such as one would expect, coming as it does **from the Lord the spirit**. Ver. 17 ("the Lord is the spirit") shows that this is the true rendering of ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος, and not either of the other theoretically possible renderings—"from the spirit of the Lord" or (still less) "from the Lord of the spirit." This transformation is natural, as it has its source (*ἀπό*) in Him. It is the spirit, Christ, the spirit of Christ that transforms.

This little paragraph glows with great thought and culminates in a vision of unusual beauty and power. The pathos of the Jewish position was that it mistook the temporary for the eternal. And when that mistake is repeated to-day, the explanation is often now, as it was then, a moral one—a veil is upon

## CHAPTER IV

I THEREFORE, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

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the *heart*, whether that veil be woven by prejudice (as was the case with Paul before his conversion) or of sin.

That veil is removed when men frankly face Christ. "When men turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away." In Him they confront the eternal order, and, united with Him, they stand within it. In Him they are delivered from the restrictions that strangle spontaneity and all true life : "where His spirit is—there is liberty"—one of those great words of Paul, which goes right to the heart of the gospel. Christ makes men *free* (Gal. v. 1), free from the incubus of tradition and all externally imposed authority, free to think and speak and act in accordance with the impulse of the spirit within.

But that spirit must be a Christian spirit, it is the spirit of *the Lord*. It is by obeying *its* impulses that we are transformed : the glorious change proceeds *from* it (*ἀπό*), from Him. That is one aspect of the matter : the other is that the transformation is effected *as we gaze*. We learn of Him and His spirit by looking at Him ; and as we steadily behold His glory, silently but surely does the quality of His life pass over into ours, till we actually become the very image of the Lord whom we gaze upon. Without the steady gaze, there can be no transformation. It is a daring and wonderful picture—the servant of Christ looking with unveiled face upon his exalted Lord, and being transformed, as he gazes, from glory to glory, till finally he wears His very image.

*The Apostle's Frankness and Sincerity as a Preacher* (iv. 1-6).

1. Underlying Paul's exhibition of the glory and liberty of the new dispensation (iii. 7-18) was of course his own particular experience of it ; it is fitting therefore that he should now express this experience in more personal terms. **Therefore—*i.e.* considering the glory and the liberty of the new dispensation, of which he is a *minister*—seeing that we are in possession of this ministry, not through any assumption or claim of our own, but in accordance with the mercy which has been**

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but, by manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

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shown us by God when He called us to it (*ηλεγθημεν*, aorist), we show no weakness, or faintness. The minister of such a dispensation, glorious and free, can be no coward. He is bound to speak sincerely, frankly, boldly, as he has already claimed to do (iii. 12).

2. Timidity or cowardice leads to crookedness and subterfuge ; as Paul is no coward, he needs no subterfuge. He scorns all secret, underhand ways—such as probably his opponents employed—as *disgraceful* ; he repudiates, once for all, all connection with them. But, so far are we from indulging in the crooked methods to which timidity leads, that we have repudiated (without, however, implying that he had ever used them) the hidden things of shame : whether *της αἰσχύνης* is objective, “ hidded things of *dishonesty*,” or subjective, the things which a sense of *shame* leads a man to conceal, the phrase practically means “ disgraceful secrecies.” The particular crookedness which Paul here repudiates is craftiness in his life and especially in his preaching : he is not walking in craftiness nor adulterating the word of God, that is, the gospel, by blending with it, from whatever motive, elements that did not properly belong to it (cf. ii. 17). His Judaistic opponents did so adulterate it, by insisting upon the concomitant validity of the Mosaic dispensation. Not so Paul—his only methods are those of absolute sincerity and candour. He had been accused of “ commanding ” himself (cf. iii. 1). It is true, he says ; but he owes his commendation not to letters, nor to any plausible adulteration of his message, but simply and solely to his sincerity, a sincerity which is admitted by even an unsophisticated conscience, and upon which he does not fear the scrutiny of the divine eye. In our preaching there is no deception ; on the contrary, it is by making the truth, the real gospel, plain that we commend ourselves in relation to every human conscience in the sight of God. As the

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost :

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the

minister of a free and glorious dispensation, Paul is bound not to adulterate his message or to mystify his audiences. The *truth* must not be handled deceitfully or even obscurely : Paul's title to commendation is that he makes it *plain* (*φανερώσει*)—with great effect this phrase, “by the manifestation of the truth,” is put first. His frank and fearless presentation of the gospel is related to (*πρός*), appeals to, the conscience : if there be a conscience which resists the appeal, so much the worse for that conscience : it is clearly that of a man who is *perishing* (ver. 3). But from the standpoint of the preacher, the appeal, being as honest as it is earnest, is triumphantly made to *every* (*πᾶσαν*) human conscience. And lest the appeal to a *human* (*ἀνθρώπων*) conscience should not be an absolute test of integrity and sincerity, Paul reminds his hearers that he is conscious of uttering it **in the sight of GOD** (cf. ii. 17). Beyond this, there is no appeal. One who is not afraid to appeal to every human conscience, and even to God Himself, has surely vindicated himself amply of any charge of cowardice or duplicity.

**3, 4.** Still, brave and sincere as was Paul's presentation of the gospel, there were some by whom it was repudiated, some to whom it was *veiled* : how could that be? **But if our gospel** —the gospel preached so *plainly* (ver. 2) by us—**IS** (*καὶ* emphasizes *ἴστιν*) **veiled, it is in the case of the perishing that it is veiled.** Those who repudiate the gospel as preached by Paul (*ἥμῶν*) stand self-condemned : the veil, of which they complain, is *on their hearts* (iii. 15), and they are *on the way to destruction* (*ἀπολλυμένοις*). They constitute the class unaffected by “the sweet savour of Christ” (ii. 15), and for whom it will prove itself a savour of death. They are those **whose unbelieving minds** (lit. thoughts) **the god of this world** (i.e. Satan) has **blinded**; literally “in whom the god of this age, blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving.” Grammatically, the sentence is overloaded : we expect, “whose thoughts the god . . . blinded,” or if the sentence had been made independent, “but he blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving.” In its present form, the last clause, “of the unbelieving,” is unnecessary, and even redundant,

minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

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as the blinded thoughts are clearly those of “them that are perishing,” and the grammatical awkwardness of the clause has suggested to one scholar that it is a gloss. Too much grammatical propriety, however, should not be expected in the swift epistolary style of St. Paul. The words have a propriety of their own. They help to fix the responsibility for the ruin of “them that are perishing” upon the men themselves and *their own unbelief*, as well as upon the devil who blinds them. It is *such men, unbelievers*, men with the *veil upon their hearts*, whom the devil blinds : and his *blinding* of them is more dreadfully effective than the *veil*. Unbelief (of the heart) is the road to blindness and ultimate destruction. The “god of this age” (*aiών*)—that is, the age till Christ comes again, when the true God shall be “all in all” (1 Cor. xv. 28)—is Satan ; a remarkable utterance for one whose monotheism was so thorough-going as was Paul’s : he is expressing himself in accordance with the conceptions of his time, cf. Eph. ii. 2, “the prince of the powers of the air”; in John xii. 31 (cf. xiv. 30) he is called “the prince of this world.” The phrase suggests a deadly organized opposition to the gospel on the part of unseen demonic forces, **to prevent the dawning of the light** (lit. *illumination*) **of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who must indeed be very glorious, as He is the image of God. A.V. somewhat misses the point in its rendering “*the glorious gospel of Christ*”: more correct would be “*the gospel of the glorious Christ*,” the Christ who ushered in the new and glorious dispensation (iii.), though doubtless the gospel which reflects Him (iii. 18) is glorious too. Most of the best MSS. omit *avτοῖς* (unto them) after *avγάσαι*: the omission perhaps more effectively suggests the deadliness of the opposition organised by the “god of this age” to the progress of the gospel—his aim is to keep it not only from shining *upon them* (those whom he has blinded) but from shining at all. The exceeding glory of Christ is powerfully suggested by the words “who is the image of God,” the visible image of the invisible God. The light that streams from His glory, brilliant as it is, remains unseen by those whom unbelief has blinded.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out

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5. Paul has been accused by his opponents of preaching "himself." How impossible and absurd this charge must have sounded to one who was conscious of standing evermore within such a blaze of heavenly glory, and whose whole ambition in life was to interpret that glory to others, and to bring them within its illuminating power. One whose theme was no less than the exalted and glorious Christ—the very image of God Himself, surely could not be guilty of preaching himself. Those who made the charge may have meant, that, as Paul had not known the earthly Jesus, his preaching of Him rested only on his imagination, not on objective fact—that therefore he preached *himself*, his own ideas, speculations, etc.; but this is not so. **For it is not ourselves that we preach, but the glorious Christ Jesus;** and we preach Him (*as*) Lord, so that you need have no fear, as you seem to have, of *our* tyrannizing (*κυριεύομεν*, i. 24) over you. On the contrary, we preach *Him* as Lord, **and ourselves (as) your servants, for Jesus' sake:** it is for *His* sake that we serve you—that you may be brought within the glorious dispensation which He created, and that through the proclamation of His gospel the knowledge of the glory of God may illuminate your hearts.

6. This verse explains ver. 5. As it is *God* who gave Paul the illumination, and gave it to him for the illumination of others (to serve them in the gospel for Jesus' sake) how can he possibly preach himself? **For the God, who said at creation (cf. Gen. i. 3) "Out of darkness shall shine light," (He it is) who shone in our hearts.** The MSS. waver between *λάμψει* (as translated above) and *λάμψαι* (infin.) which would mean, "God who commanded the light to *shine* out of darkness." There is a fine contrast here between the work of God and that of the devil: the latter *blinds* men, the former *shines* in upon their hearts, and illuminates them. Human hearts are dark, till they are thus illumined; a veil is upon them, till it is removed by conversion to Christ (iii. 15, 16). Conversion is like creation; it is indeed a new and greater creation—for while, at creation, God *commanded* the light to *shine*, in

of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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conversion it is He *Himself* who shines. Behind this broad statement lies the particular experience of Paul's own conversion. There he was smitten by a *light* of overwhelming glory, and the face from which the glory shone was *the face of Christ*, a steady and abiding glory, which Paul from that hour had never ceased to see, and which would shine for ever—unlike the transient glory which lit the face of His great antitype Moses (iii. 7). It is not quite clear whether the last clause *πρὸς φωτισμὸν . . . χριστοῦ* ("with a view to the illumination of the knowledge, etc.") is intended to elaborate the idea of *shining* (He shone in *my* heart to give light *to me* of the knowledge, etc.) or whether it adds to the simple thought of shining the idea that the light must be diffused (He shone in *my* heart to give light *to others*). Something can be said for both views. On the one hand, it was on the shining face of Christ at his conversion that Paul saw and became acquainted with the glory of God. On the other hand, the previous verse had ended by representing Paul as the servant of the Corinthians for Jesus' sake ; that is, he must preach among them, that the light which shines in his heart may arise and shine in theirs. The possibilities are so evenly balanced that it is hard to decide between them. In either case, God shone in Paul's heart *to bring the light* (whether to himself, or, through him, to others) *of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*.

Paul claims to be a man who abhors subterfuge and compromise, all crooked and diplomatic dealing, especially in his life as a preacher. He is a man of uncompromising sincerity, who feels the holy obligation to *make the truth plain*, and who speaks straight home to the consciences of men. This openness of speech and conduct he has, because he is conscious of standing within the light. The glorious light which broke upon him in the way to Damascus, the shining face of Christ upon which he saw the unutterable glory of God, have continued not only to haunt him but to shine upon him ; and, as he walks in that light, conscious of its illumination and obligation,

his life becomes transparent as the day. To such a man artifice, diplomacy, and self-laudation, are an impossibility, and he repudiates the charge with earnestness and sorrow (cf. i. 17 ff.).

In verses 4–6 there is a suggestive view—just indicated, not elaborated—of history as a Titanic conflict between the powers of light and of darkness. There are forces, organized, as it were, under some “god of this world,” conspiring to intensify the unbelief of men who reject Jesus and to blind them altogether : forces whose diabolical and deliberate aim is “to prevent the dawning of the gospel of the glory of Christ,” and to set men on the road to destruction. But against them evermore fights the great God of light, who out of the deepest darkness can command light to arise. Into veiled and blinded hearts, when they turn to the Lord (iii. 16), a great light streams from His shining face, and it is day. Those who have the light are divinely summoned to diffuse it: this is their share in the conflict with darkness. “We are your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

*The Fragile Vessel and the Glorious Treasure (iv. 7–15).*

In the preceding sections, Paul has been speaking much of glory. The dispensation, of which he is a minister, is one of exceeding glory. The Lord of it is a Lord of glory. It is, in one aspect, His glory that is the theme of the gospel. From His resplendent face it is the glory of God Himself that shines. And those who behold the glory of the Lord are themselves transformed into the same image from glory to glory. God, Christ, the new dispensation and its ministers, all alike are glorious.

To the opponents of Paul there may have seemed something incongruous, and almost ridiculous, in these bold claims of his to glory. So far from advancing from glory to glory (iii. 18) “his bodily presence, they say, is weak and his speech of no account” (x. 10). The external appearance of Paul did not at all suggest the glory by which the man within was illuminated. Besides, the anxieties and dangers by which he was continually beset had worn him out before his time : they were killing him, as this paragraph expressively hints ; and there are some who even believe that his opponents regarded his sufferings as divine chastisement. The contrast

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

between his appearance and his claims was indeed glaring: how could they be reconciled? This contrast and reconciliation we now proceed to consider.

7. But we have this treasure, that is, the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (ver. 6), and perhaps, in a larger sense, the glorious ministry of the gospel, in earthen vessels, that is, in bodies mortal (ver. 11) and therefore frail, and exposed, as was Paul, to special dangers, assaults, and harassing experiences. But that such a treasure should reside in such a body was really no more astonishing than that gold or silver should be deposited, as was sometimes done, in vessels of earthenware. It is never safe to argue from the vessel to the treasure. Indeed, this very incongruity between vessel and treasure serves a divine purpose: it is in order that the excess of the power, the apostle's extraordinary and triumphant activity, altogether in excess of anything that one would naturally have expected from one so worn as he, should be recognized to be God's (*τοῦ Θεοῦ*) and not to have its source (*ἐξ*) in us. How could such a man accomplish such an exceeding mighty work? Clearly, answers the apostle, as the power displayed is out of all proportion to the man himself, it can not have come from him, it can therefore only be God's (cf. xii. 9).

8, 9. These verses elaborate the contrast between the frail body, vexed and harassed on all sides, and the divine power which not only sustains him, but evermore enables him to rise fresh (ver. 16) and triumphant. In every (direction) pressed but not inextricably (lit. never driven into a place so narrow that there is no escape from it), perplexed but not to desperation (for this word play, *ἀπορούμενοι* and *ἐξαπορούμενοι*, impossible to render adequately in English, cf. note on i. 13) pursued, but never forsaken by God, thrown down to the ground, but never to perish. This swift succession of passive participles, shows how fierce were the circumstances

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

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with which Paul had to contend, and which, but for the sustaining grace of God, would inevitably have brought him to *despair* and *destruction*. There is no real contradiction between the statement in i. 8 that he had actually despaired of life, and the “never despairing” of ver. 8 here. The former phrase illustrates the unusual peril to which Paul was on that occasion exposed, the latter his general attitude (pres. ptc.) to all peril.

10. The varied experiences suggested by vv. 8, 9 are summed up and illuminated in ver. 10 : **evermore** ( $\pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\circ\epsilon$  corresponds to  $\acute{\iota}\nu\ \pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\acute{\iota}$ , ver. 8) in my missionary travels ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$ ) **bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus**. The fierceness of the experiences with which Paul was being continually confronted, already plain enough from vv. 8, 9, are pathetically illustrated by the word  $\nu\acute{e}k\rho\omega\iota\epsilon$  : they constituted a continual *process of death*. They were gradually killing him, and would one day kill him. But his consolation and his joy was that he shared this experience with *Jesus*. He, too, and in similar ways, had been subjected to a gradual *dying*, which had culminated in His death on the cross ; and the disciple is content and even glad to be as his master. The word *Jesus* recalls his earthly, historical, experiences of suffering. This continual experience of dying, this daily facing of death and daily triumph over it—for Paul is still alive and working *mightily* (ver. 7)—has for its object **that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body**. The body which was the seat of the *dying*, must also be the seat of the triumph over the menace of death : and the triumph was effected by the *living Jesus*. It was *the life of Jesus*, of the risen and exalted Jesus, that was made manifest in him. He shared alike the dying and the life of Jesus. Paul saw in his daily deliverance from death not only a witness to the power of his living Lord, but an identity of his own life with that of his Lord. It was actually *the life of Jesus Himself* that was coming to visibility in him,

11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according

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and it so came because he was willing to die continually for Jesus' sake. As Professor Denney says, "To wear life out in the service of Jesus is to open it to the entrance of Jesus' life" (*Expositor's Bible*, 2 Cor. p. 163).

**11, 12.** The thought which ver. 10 had expressed mystically, ver. 11 expresses more definitely. For we, who are alive, are being continually delivered over unto death—alive indeed, but with this continual menace of death—for Jesus' sake, in order that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. This sentence corresponds to and elucidates ver. 10 : cf. *ἀεὶ, πάντοτε* : the rare and difficult phrase "the dying of Jesus" is replaced by the simpler and less profound "delivered to death for Jesus' sake," and the "body" becomes the "mortal flesh." The exhibition of the life of Jesus in bodies of *frail* and *mortal flesh* is peculiarly wonderful ; and this is the divine purpose of the apostle's daily exposure to death. Not all such exposure manifests the life of Jesus, but only such as is undergone *for Jesus' sake*. The suffering which is for His sake, is conceived in ver. 10 as shared with Him—the true counterpart, and, as it were, the continuation of His own. There is something unusually tender and impressive about the fourfold repetition of the name *Jesus* in this passage. It is charged with the memory of His earthly sufferings, which are repeated and perpetuated in those that are His. Consequently death works in us, but life in you. Paul, though yet alive (cf. *οἱ ζῶντες*, ver. 11) is slowly, but surely *dying*—dying, however, *for Jesus' sake* ; it is part of his ministry of Jesus, and by that ministry, by the gospel of Jesus which he proclaims, *life is operative* in the Corinthians. Their *living* flows from his *dying* : the life that is operative in them is the life that is manifested in him—*the life of Jesus*.

**13.** Paul has just spoken of the death which is working in him : meantime, however, he might say, with the Psalmist

as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus

(cxviii. 17) he is not dead, but lives, and declares the works of the Lord. Within him works the mighty spirit of *faith*, giving him both vision and confidence: and in this strength and inspiration he fearlessly proclaims the gospel. **But we**, possessing as we do the same spirit of faith as the ancient Psalmist—in accordance with that which is written in Ps. cxvi. 10, namely “I had faith, therefore I spoke”—we also have faith, therefore we also speak. He recognizes his spiritual kinship with one of Israel’s ancient singers, whose faith impelled him to utterance: *he, too,—(καὶ ἡμεῖς, for the ages are linked each to each by the bond of faith)—inspired by the same spirit of faith, boldly proclaims the gospel.* The meaning of the Hebrew words, of which Paul quotes the Septuagint translation, is rather uncertain—perhaps “I believe (my faith is fixed) when I speak”; but the main point, the connection of faith with utterance, is unambiguous. *The spirit of faith* is the spirit connected with faith, the spirit which manifests itself where faith is present. True faith is not silent, but brave and *vocal*. It impels Paul to *preach* the gospel, though it is gradually costing him his life, that the life of Jesus may be operative in others. The obvious connection in Greek between *πίστις* and *πιστεύομεν* is somewhat obscured by the English “faith” and “we believe”; hence the rendering “we have faith.”

14. Paul’s persistency and courage in preaching the gospel are due, in part, to his mighty *faith* in the future—in particular to his faith in the *resurrection*. He is sustained by his vision of the day when he would be “raised up” and “presented” in company with his Corinthian converts. Or it would be more correct to say that this is to the apostle not so much matter of faith as of *knowledge*: he speaks knowing that **He** (that is, God), who raised up (the Lord: omitted in some MSS.) Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus and present (us) with you. He is *sure* of the resurrection (cf. v. 1), and he can afford to be brave. Instead of *σὺν*, some MSS. read *διὰ Ἰησοῦ*—so A.V. (*by, through Jesus*). But

shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the

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*σὺν (with)*, besides being better attested, is more profound, and finely suggests the *fellowship* of Paul in the resurrection experience of Jesus, as before in His “dying” (ver. 10). Jesus, of course, has already been raised, and the *with* has led some scholars to interpret the “raising” which Paul here has in view for himself, as the daily resurrection from the menaces of death (cf. vv. 10, 11) which prove that the resurrection life of Jesus is in Him. But the “presentation” shows that Paul has in view the final and literal resurrection. This passage seems to be cast in a different mould from others in which he expects to be alive at the coming of Christ (cf. 1 Thes. iv. 15); but he had already, once at least (2 Cor. i. 8) drawn so near the gates of death that he contemplates his death before that consummation as altogether possible. But he *knows* that he will rise (or, to be more correct, “be raised”) *with* Jesus—not of course, in point of time, but that he will *share* Jesus’ resurrection experience. The precise idea to be attached to the words “He will present” is somewhat uncertain: it is usually interpreted of appearing “before the judgment-seat of Christ” (cf. v. 10). If that be so, at any rate the associations of that presentation are, for Paul and his converts, not stern but kindly. It is the thought of this great consummation that sustains and emboldens Paul amid danger and persecution, and when face to face with death. Very tender and affectionate are the concluding words *with you*, which are given the place of emphasis. He will be presented in company with his beloved converts; and this is the vision that heartens him.

15. Yes: his converts are uppermost in his thoughts. For all those things that I have done and suffered (vv. 8-11) (*are*) for your sakes, that, in this world “life may be operative in them” (ver. 12) and that, in the world to come, they may be “raised” and “presented”; in particular, that the divine favour, which was multiplied by being diffused among many (lit. *the more*), should render the thanksgiving abundant unto the glory of God. The

abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

meaning appears to be that the grace shown to Paul, through which his life has been spared and his strength sustained, may, through his ministry, diffuse its blessed and quickening (ver. 12) influence over a wider area, thus multiplying itself ; this grace then ought to be *gratefully* and abundantly acknowledged, and thus God will be glorified. There is an obvious word play (cf. ver. 8) in *πλεονάσασα*, *πλειόνων* ("rendered manifold through the *many*"), and in *χάρις*, *εὐχαριστία* (*grace, gratitude*). There are several other ways, however of construing this sentence, according as we regard (a) *πλεονάσασα* as transitive (governing *εὐχαριστίαν*, "having, through the greater number, multiplied the thanksgiving") or intransitive (as above); (b) *διὰ* as governing *τῶν πλειόνων* (as above) or *τὴν εὐχαριστίαν* ("on account of the thanksgiving of the greater number"; so A.V.); (c) *περισσεύσῃ* as transitive (as above) or intransitive (as A.V. *redound to the glory of God*). Stanley explains, "in order that God's goodness, which, through the *prayers* of the greater part of you, has become greater *to me*, may make your thanksgiving greater, and so God's glory greater also." The passage strongly recalls i. 11. Just as faith should find utterance (ver. 13), so grace should elicit gratitude.

What a harassed and tempestuous life Paul must have had ! The participles in verses 8 and 9 are charged with a multitude of vexatious experiences, which would have driven a smaller man to despondency, if not despair (ver. 8). But in all things he is more than conqueror, because he is conscious of being sustained by a strength not his own. The indomitable will which he threw into his missionary work, the iron energy with which he prosecuted it, were clearly not his own. How could so frail and slender a body have carried on a warfare so tremendous in its own strength ? The power that shines so triumphantly through the bodily weakness is not his, but God's. The life that bids daily defiance to death is the life of Jesus, that is expressing and revealing itself in him.

Therein lies the secret of his power—in his consciousness

16 For which cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

of union with (*σύν*) Jesus : *us too with Jesus*—that is his motto (ver. 14). He suffers not only for Jesus' sake (ver. 11), but as Jesus suffered (ver. 10) ; and as he shares His suffering, so will he also share His resurrection. It is upon this glorious hope, or rather certainty (*εἰδότες*, ver. 14) that he sustains his harassed soul. The life of Jesus is indeed in him, but the resurrection is before him. His faith gives him at once vision and courage—a courage born in part of the vision. Well might a man, be he preacher or other, do his work with fearless enthusiasm amid persecution and opposition, whose eyes were steadfastly fixed upon the day, when he and those for whom he had successfully laboured would be raised and presented to Christ.

A fine sense of the spiritual kinship subsisting between men of faith, breathes throughout the paragraph. Paul looks back across the centuries and feels himself one with the psalmist who had spoken, because he had believed. He is one with his converts, and looks forward to the glad day when he will be “presented” with them. And he is one with Jesus—one in suffering and death, and one in the resurrection-life.

#### *The Glorious Hope (iv. 16–v. 5).*

The secret of the apostle's invincible courage he has already made plain : he is sustained by the life of Jesus which is daily manifesting itself in him, amid weakness and distress, and he is sustained by the sure hope of the resurrection. This hope he now proceeds to illustrate more fully.

**16. On this account**, sustained as we are by the life of Jesus, and by the hope of resurrection, **we show no weakness**. For a similar claim and a similar reason, cf. ver. 1. How could one who was in possession of such a ministry (ver. 1) and such a hope, play the coward? **But, though**, as a matter of fact (indic.) **our outward man**—the frail, mortal body, which, though sustained by the life of Jesus, is nevertheless on the way to death (vv. 8–11)—**is being gradually destroyed, nevertheless our inward man** (his moral and spiritual personality) **is being renewed day by**

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory ;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

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day. Every morning Paul feels a new accession of strength and joy, as he faces afresh the work God had given him to do. His spirit knew no weakness or weariness : it was not subject to the law of decay and death.

17. Verse 17 shows what Paul means by the daily renewal of the inward man. **For the lightness of our affliction, which is for the moment**, that is, which lasts only till death or the coming of Christ, is **working out for us, more and more exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory** (cf. Rom. viii. 18). The glory is *accomplished* by the suffering—its natural fruit. The phrase *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν* (lit. “in exceeding measure and unto an exceeding issue”) must go with the verb, as it cannot go with the noun (so A.V.) nor yet with the adjective : that which is *eternal* cannot be more so. The affliction is real—so real, as we have seen, that it is gradually killing Paul (ver. 10) ; but to eyes fixed upon the glory, it is *light*. If the one were weighed against the other, the glory would be beyond all comparison, the heavier—there is a very *weight* of glory. Again, in duration, as in weight, there is no comparison ; the affliction will last only till death or Jesus comes, the glory will last for ever. The glory is more than moral and spiritual, it is all the glory of the new age which is ushered in with the coming of Christ.

18. It is those who have *eyes* (*σκοπούντων*) for the unseen glories, that experience the daily renewal (ver. 16). The passing affliction works out the eternal glory, because we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are but for a season—*temporary* rather than temporal—but the things which are not seen are *eternal*. The phrase “the things which are seen” is capable of a large interpretation,

## CHAPTER V

1 FOR we know that, if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

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nor would this interpretation be illegitimate : but its immediate application is to the *affliction* (ver. 17) and sufferings which came upon Paul in the discharge of his evangelic ministry. He does not fix his eyes upon these things ; he looks *through* them to the glory beyond. They are *temporary* ; they will cease at death, or perhaps even before death, if Christ, whom Peter is expecting, should come. The “things which are not seen” are his *aim*, his goal (*σκοπός*). Perhaps this phrase is not to be interpreted in too severely spiritual a sense. As Bengel has pointed out, Paul does not say “the invisible things” ; and his meaning may be, “the things which are not *yet* seen”—the as yet unseen glories of the world to come, upon which one day the eye will rest with quiet joy.

1. Paul has just spoken (iv. 17) of the eternal weight of glory which is to be the issue and crown of his earthly affliction. Of this glory he has no doubt ; for he *knows* that the earthly body which, like a tent, will be taken down at death, will be replaced—whether then or at the coming of Christ—by another, a heavenly body. **For we know that if our earthly tent-house be broken up**, as it will be by death, **we have not merely a tent but a building from God**—He is its source (*ἐκ*) and creator—a **house not made with hands** (that is, supernatural), **eternal** (unlike the temporary tent), **in the heavens**. The comparison—familiar to Pythagorean philosophy—of the earthly body to a *tent*, would be peculiarly natural to one who had himself been a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3). The earthly body shares the frailty and temporariness of the *tent*, the heavenly body partakes of the stability and permanence of a *building*, especially as it is a building whose maker is God. The contrast recalls that between the tent and the city in Hebrews xi. 9, 10. The *house* to which Paul looks forward is not heaven itself, it is *in* heaven : it is the heavenly body *not made with hands*. The same epithet could also be fairly applied to the natural body, as this too is from God (1 Cor. xii. 24) ; but the resurrection body is divine in a special sense (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 38), and the epithet

God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

here is something like our “supernatural.” This body is *eternal*, the tent-body *upon the earth* (*ἐπίγειος*: not “made of earth”) is transient, dissolved at death. How has Paul this definite assurance (*οἰδαμέν*, cf. iv. 14) of the heavenly body? If, in spite of the plural number, he is speaking merely for himself, his assurance may be a gift of the spirit (cf. ver. 5), it is an inward certainty. If, however, the words “we know” have to be interpreted generally, they may, as Bousset suggests, be taken to refer to “apocalyptic teachings and traditions, well-known to him and his readers,” but no longer known to us. The other interpretation, however, seems the more natural (cf. iv. 14).

Simple as the words of this verse are, its precise meaning is very difficult to determine. One thing is certain, Paul distinctly contemplates the possibility of his own death before the coming of Christ. He longs indeed to be among those who will not die but be changed (1 Cor. xv. 51); but recent experience has brought him so close to death (2 Cor. i. 8), that he feels that his “daily deliverance unto death for Jesus’ sake” (iv. 11) may well issue in death itself. If so, what then? His answer is that, instead of the fallen tent, we have—and we are sure of it—a divine house, that is, a celestial, supernatural body. What does he mean by “*we have it*”? Does he mean: we have it now, it is ours already, laid up for us “in the heavens”? And if so, how are we to conceive the relation of this body to the earthly body? would there be any strict and necessary relation at all, as, e.g. between the seed and the grain (1 Cor. xv. 38)? Or does the apostle mean *we shall have* a heavenly body, using the present tense (*ἔχομεν*) to indicate the vividness with which he realizes it? And if he means “*we shall have*,” is that body to be given immediately at death, or not till the coming of Christ?

Some scholars prefer to believe that this body is given at death—the frail tent-body, at its dissolution, being instantly replaced by the divine eternal body; in that case, the dead Christian enters at once and fully equipped upon his heavenly life. A general resurrection and judgment would, from this point of view, be superfluous; the soul’s destiny has already been finally determined, and it has entered upon its new life in

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven :

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

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its appropriate celestial body. We have further to remember that the thought which Paul is here expressing is a consolatory thought, and any postponement beyond death of the investiture with the heavenly body, would proportionally seem to deprive this thought of its consolation. At the same time, attractive as is the idea that the new body instantly replaces the old one at death, that is probably not Paul's meaning. His words must be compatible with the general resurrection and the judgment, both of which happen to be mentioned in the immediate context, the former in iv. 14, the latter in ver. 10. As these facts, especially perhaps the former, would be depleted of their meaning, if the heavenly body were given immediately after death, it seems more reasonable to suppose that that body is regarded as being given at the coming of Christ. In that case, between death and His coming, the believer would be in a bodiless state, the earthly body having perished and the heavenly having not yet been conferred. The apostle, however, did not regard this state as comfortless, or contemplate it with a shudder. Far from it; for in it he could be at home with Christ (ver. 8), in an even more real sense than he could be in the body, real as was to him the presence of Christ in the body (vi. 10, 11). Even "*Death* shall not be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38 f.). The stages may then be conceived as follows. When the believer dies, he departs to be with Christ (cf. Phil. i. 23); when Christ comes again, he is clothed with his celestial body.

2, 3. Paul is sure of receiving the heavenly body, therefore all the more does he *sigh with longing* for it. Best of all will it be, if the Lord comes while he is yet alive, so that he will be spared the grim necessity of dying, of having the "tent" taken down, and thus the immortal body will be put, like a robe as it were, *over* (*ἐπενδύσασθαι*) his mortal body. (Notice the change of metaphor from a house to a garment.) To those who die, a body will be given, but those who are alive when He comes will be changed (1 Cor. xv. 51), that which is mortal being

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

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*swallowed up* by the immortal which, as it were, descends upon it (ver. 4) ; and this is the happier consummation for which Paul longs. **For indeed on this account**—possessing, as we do, so bright and sure a hope, cf. ver. 1 (this is better than to interpret *ἐν τούτῳ* as “*in this* tabernacle” ; *σκῆνος* would be an awkward word to supply, as it is altogether subordinate in ver. 1 ; and there is no other word with which *τούτῳ* can go)—we sigh (lit. *groan*) longing as we do to put on our habitation which is from heaven over (*ἐπ*) our mortal bodies, seeing that, when we have put it on, we shall not be found naked (that is, without a body, 1 Cor. xv. 37). If Christ should come before Paul’s death, he will have no *naked*, bodiless condition to undergo, as, according to the argument of ver. 1 (which see) he otherwise would. The variant readings *εἰπερ* and *εἴγε*, and still more *ἐνδυσάμενοι* and *ἐκδυσάμενοι* (“having put off,” i.e. the earthly body) attest the difficulty which from the beginning was felt to inhere in these verses.

4. Indeed we who are in the tent of the earthly body sigh, burdened as we are with our desire—not to put it off but to put the heavenly body on over it, in order that that which is mortal might be swallowed up by the (*τῆς*) immortal life. His desire is not simply to die : to put the earthly body off will be the highest pleasure only if the heavenly body be at once put on over (*ἐπεν*) it,—if the mortal be *absorbed*, as it were, through its investiture with the heavenly body, *the life* ; and this *change* is possible only to those who are alive at the coming of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 51).

5. Now what is the guarantee of these splendid hopes ? The deep longing for them—*στενάζομεν* (we groan) occurs twice—may powerfully suggest, but it cannot absolutely prove their

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight :)

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ultimate fulfilment. Their guarantee, however, is no other and no less than God Himself ( $\Theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma$ , at end, emphatic). Now He who wrought us for this very thing, this investiture with the heavenly body, is God, and we may be *confident* (ver. 6) that the divine purpose will not be frustrated: the future is made certain by the pledge of it which we already possess and enjoy in the spirit. He is the God who gave us the pledge which consists in the spirit (cf. i. 22).

*Present or Absent, Well-pleasing to the Lord* (v. 6-10)

One of the dominant notes of the last section had been *sighing* (vv. 2, 4); the key-note of this is *courage* (vv. 6, 7). Pressed as Paul was on every side, pursued, and smitten down (iv. 8, 9), he would long unspeakably for the eternal weight of glory: but the possibility of his dying before Christ came, though it did not make that prospect any less certain, pushed it further away, and raised for him a new problem as to what would become of him and where he would be between death and the resurrection? Where are those who have "fallen asleep"? (cf. 1 Thes. iv. 14, 1 Cor. xi. 30, xv. 51). It is this situation that Paul looks *bravely* in the face, as he remembers that even death cannot separate him from the love of God in Christ, and that to die, to be absent from the body, is to be at home with Christ. The abruptness of the Greek in vv. 6, 7, and the double assertion of his confidence ( $\theta\alpha\rho\omega\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ ,  $\theta\alpha\rho\omega\nu\mu\epsilon\nu$ ) show how deeply moved was the soul of Paul as he faced the possibility of his death, and with what triumphant confidence he was prepared to meet it.

6, 7. **Being, then, courageous** (cf. Acts xxiii. 11) **at all times**, as became one whose soul was sustained by so glorious a prospect, **and knowing that, so long as we are at home in the body, we are away from our home in the Lord**—an utterance obviously not to be taken too strictly. Emphatically Paul has already said, or at least implied, that the life of the risen Jesus was being daily manifested in his own

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

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life (iv. 10, 11) : the presence of Jesus must have been to him a great and continuous reality. In the passage before us, however, there appears to be something of the Greek notion that the body fetters the spirit ; it belongs to a different order of being from the exalted Lord, and to be in *it* is, in a sense, to be away from *Him*; **for it is through** a realm of faith that we walk here below, **not through** a realm of actual appearance. The glory (iv. 17), and especially the glorious *Lord* we do not here see face to face. We trust them, we believe in them (*πιστεύει*), we are sure of them (iv. 14), but we do not actually see them, nor shall we until, after death, we enter that other order of being to which they belong. So here, in a sense, we must be content to be pilgrims and strangers : to be in the body is to be away from the Lord ; and as He, not it, is the soul's true home, the believer is only, in the profoundest sense, at home with Him when he has left the body. But precisely therein lies the consolation and the confidence of Paul—that then he *is* at home with the Lord, even before that Lord's final coming, and before he has been invested with the heavenly body. So, with the presence of Christ assured to the apostle, death has lost its terror and its chill.

8, 9. Yes, we are courageous and well pleased, in spite of the natural shrinking from the bodiless condition which supervenes upon death, rather to be away from our home in the body and at home with (*πρός*, in relation to) the Lord. Though the apostle sighs (vv. 2-4) for the swift and painless transformation which would be his, were the Lord to come suddenly before he died, he is able to contemplate his death with calm and fearless confidence, because it will only bring him into closer fellowship with Christ. Wherefore also, solaced and strengthened by the prospect of being at home with Him, it is our ambition, whether present in or absent from our home in the body, to be well-pleasing to Him. The thought of the Lord, into whose nearer fellowship death will bring us, ought to be not only a consolation, but an inspiration and a stimulus to duty. With that fellowship in

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment

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view, all life will be so ordered as to be *well-pleasing to Him*. This is the supreme *ambition* of all who believe in Him; and the implication is that, it will be possible so to please Him even after death (when we are "absent" from the body).

10. The ambition to lead a life that will be well-pleasing to Christ is strengthened, if it needs any strengthening, by the solemn thought of His judgment-seat, before which we shall ultimately have to stand. *Well-pleasing to Him*, for we must, all of us, be revealed in our true character before the judgment-seat of Christ, in order that each individual man may receive exact requital for the things (done) through the medium of (*διὰ*) the body, according to what he did (*ἐπράξεν*, aorist) when he was alive, whether good or bad. It is not simply that we shall have to appear (A.V.) before the judgment-seat, but we shall there be manifested (*φανερωθῆναι*), shown in our essential character, stripped of all accident and disguise; what we are will, in that august moment, be made *plain*, and each man of us (*ἔκαστος*) will carry off (*κομίσηται*) his exact (*πρός*) deserts. The judgment will be a *revelation*. We are indeed saved by faith, yet the principle of retribution is not lost sight of, and the deeds done in this world by the agency of (*διά*) the body, will receive exact compensation before that great tribunal. In Rom. xiv. 10 "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God." The easy substitution of *Christ* here (also found in some inferior MSS. in Rom.) for *God* in Romans, shows the unique and *divine* authority with which, for Paul, Christ was invested. The expression is "taken from the tribunal of the Roman magistrate as the most august representation of justice which the world then exhibited. The 'Bema' was a lofty seat, raised on an elevated platform, usually at the end of the Basilica, so that the figure of the judge must have been seen towering above the crowd which thronged the long nave of the building. So sacred and solemn did this seat appear in the eyes, not only of the heathen, but of the Christian society of the Roman empire, that when, two centuries later, the Basilica became

seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether it *be* good or bad.

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the model of the Christian place of worship, the name of  $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$  (or tribunal) was transferred to the chair of the bishop ; and this chair occupied in the apse the place of the judgment-seat of the prætor." (Stanley.)

Nothing is more characteristic of this section than Paul's clear and steadyng vision of the future. He faces it as one who *knows* (v. 1, cf. iv. 14), and he finds in it his consolation and inspiration. We have no means of ascertaining the details of Paul's situation at this time, but we know that he must have drawn very near the gates of death (i. 8). He had drunk deep of sorrow. Perplexity and persecution were his constant companions, and he was slowly being killed for Jesus' sake (iv. 9-11). He sighs for the end, earnestly and often (vers. 2, 4) ; yet he shrinks from it. He shares the universal horror of dissolution, and he is none the less dear to us for that : he would rather be spared the stroke of death, and the bodiless state which followed it.

Nevertheless, he endures the present and faces the future bravely. He says to his heart, Courage. "We do not grow faint-hearted, we are courageous and confident at all times" (iv. 16, v. 6, 8). And his courage comes from his vision of the future. He has the same sure grasp of unseen realities as the writer of Psalm xci. and like him, too, he found in his faith a solace and a joy when his life was assailed by those subtle and powerful forces that threaten the peace and welfare of the soul. At the worst, he could but die before the coming of Christ. And, however strange might be the state into which death would usher him, it would at any rate bring him nearer to his Lord. Indeed, in a true sense, death would take him home. This life was after all but a pilgrimage—a pilgrimage towards the Lord. The life of Jesus was manifested no doubt even here, in his mortal flesh ; but beyond death, in an even more real sense, he would be with Him,—he would be at home.

Then again there was always the possibility that he might be "taken"—that the Lord would come, and that he would simply undergo that glorious change whereby that which was mortal would be swallowed up of immortality. That is the

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,  
we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto

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transformation for which he sighs. But whether that destiny is in store for him or not, he knows that in the heavens he has an everlasting house, he knows that he will wear the celestial body; and with that, amid all his sorrow and pain, he is content. He has eyes for the unseen things (iv. 18); he sees them as clearly as the affliction by which he is buffeted. His eye is upon the "eternal weight of glory," and already he lives with the quiet joy of eternity in his heart. Part of that glory is reflected back from the future into the dark and disheartening present; and the two worlds are linked together by the service of Christ. How Christ may be served beyond death, when we are absent from the body, we do not know; but it is my ambition, says Paul, whether present in or absent from the body, to be well-pleasing to Him. Such an ambition might well fill a troubled life with peace and joy.

But the thought of the future was solemnizing as well as consoling. That future held a judgment-seat as well as a throne of glory. And before that seat all would have to appear, and the inner quality of their life would be exposed to a white and searching light. There every man's real worth would be laid bare, and his reward would be in exact proportion to his worth. It is interesting to find Paul end this part of his argument with the thought of the judgment: it helps us to feel how bracing and strenuous a thing his religion was. It is not only or even chiefly a consolation, but an incentive to duty. The contemplation of the glory may lift a man over his afflictions, and enable him to regard them as a light thing; but the contemplation of the judgment-seat sobers, humbles, and purifies.

*The Constraining Love of Christ (v. 11-15).*

The passage that follows is involved in much difficulty, and the precise connection between the verses is often anything but obvious. In general, however, they contain a reassertion of the apostle's sincerity, and of his unselfish devotion to the welfare of the Corinthian church.

11. This paragraph is intimately connected with the last (*οὗτος*) by the solemn and purifying thought of the judgment-seat.

God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf,

Knowing, then, as we have just admitted, the fear of Christ, the Lord, at whose judgment-bar we shall have to stand to receive our deserts, and in whose presence the real secrets and quality of our life will be transparent, we persuade men. It is not clear whether, in this somewhat general phrase, Paul means that he persuades men to embrace the gospel, or that he persuades them of his own sincerity; both are perhaps involved. But whether he is preaching or defending his motives, he always speaks with the solemn consciousness of his final accountability. Indeed, without waiting till he stands before the judgment-seat of Christ, he knows that his life is already searched, open, and transparent; in his efforts to persuade *men* (*ἀνθρώπους*) he knows that he has to reckon with a present God (*Θεῷ*)—hence he adds, and to God we are already permanently (perf.) manifest (cf. ver. 10). The future judgment, and the present consciousness of God, would be an effective deterrent to insincerity, did such exist. And I trust, he adds, that the sincerity of my motives is manifest also in your individual (plur.) consciences. There were elements, perhaps, in Paul's demeanour to which a superficial or unsympathetic criticism might well have taken exception; but he appeals with *hopefulness* (*ἐλπίζω*) to the deeper judgment of their *conscience* (cf. iv. 2).

12. This solemn and emphatic assertion of his sincerity may look as if he were guilty of *self-commendation*—apparently a frequent charge against the apostle (cf. iii. 1). But the truth is, we are not again commanding ourselves to you: he was simply asserting himself against the depreciation of his opponents, who were fond of emphasizing their own external and irrelevant advantages. But we make this assertion of our absolute sincerity, simply by way of giving you an occasion of boasting on our behalf, in order that you may have an answer to offer those who boast in surface appearances and not in heart. The contrast between the *face* (*πρόσωπον*) and the *heart* (*καρδία*) is suggestive, but does not

that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God : or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

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enable us to ascertain precisely the grounds on which Paul's detractors rested their claims to superiority—probably, however, their connection with the Jerusalem church and the apostles, possibly even their acquaintance with Jesus : in any case, upon things which touched only the surface, not the *heart* of Christianity.

13. It is difficult to connect this verse with the preceding verses. Paul has just been asserting his sincerity : he now seems to say, more specifically, that his action has been controlled by a pure and unselfish regard for the welfare of the Corinthian church. His conduct had been subjected to a double criticism. On the one hand, his *ecstatic* (*ἐξέστημεν*) moods appear to have been made by some the subject of reproach ; and his moderation and *sobriety* (*σωφροῦμεν*) may have been interpreted as craft and worldly wisdom. Both these charges ignore the singleness and purity of his motive. **For, if we indulged in ecstatic moods, it was to God**—that was a matter between God and myself ; if on the other hand we exercise sobriety, **it is for you**—in your interests. My conduct, whether of one kind or another, is never dictated by selfish interests : it looks out upon God or you, but never upon self. It is quite possible that *ἐξέστημεν* refers to the consuming enthusiasm which characterized all Paul's work, and secured for him, as for his Master (Mark iii. 21, *ἐξέστη*) the reputation of being “beside himself” ; in that case, the words may be translated, as in R.V. “whether we *are* beside ourselves” ; but the choice of the aorist tense, which appears to be deliberately contrasted with the present *σωφροῦμεν*, rather points to a particular manifestation, in the past, of the ecstatic temper—possibly in a vision (cf. xii. 1 ff.) possibly through speaking with tongues, in which Paul excelled (1 Cor. xiv. 18). His sobriety, shown in his tender regard for the idiosyncrasies of the individual and in his desire to meet them temperately, may have been interpreted as a cunningly obsequious attempt to “please all men in all things” ; but he implies now, what he had plainly

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead :

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live

said before, that he was “not seeking his own interest, but that of the many, that they might be saved” (1 Cor. x. 33). Or the meaning may be, that though gifted with the power of speaking with tongues, he yet in a spirit of Christian *sobriety*, refused to exercise that gift, because it contributed nothing to the edification of the church ; he restrained his ecstatic gift, and spoke in the church not with tongues, but “with the understanding.” The exercise of the gift he indulged in only in private,—in such a way as concerned only God and himself.

14, 15. This verse lets us into the secret of Paul’s unselfish devotion to God and to the church. He is kept in the straight and narrow way of unselfishness by the constraining *love of Christ*. For the love of Christ, that is, the love of Christ to him and to the world, not primarily his love to Christ, constrains us, hems me in (as a man is hemmed in by a crowd : same word in Luke viii. 45, συνέχοντι) and urges me on. Selfishness is impossible to a man who knows and lives under this constraint : he will always have in view “not his own interest, but that of the many” (1 Cor. x. 33). This constraint continually (pres. συνέχει) holds him, and it dates back to the time of his conversion, having then (aorist κρίναντας : not “because we thus judge,” A.V., R.V.) reached this decision that one died for all, therefore they all (*oi πάντες*) died. Some MSS. insert εἰ before εἰς (this is the text followed by A.V. —if one died for all) : the best omit it, though, if original, it might easily have fallen out before εἰς. In any case, the stress falls upon the second clause, introduced by ἀπα, not on the first ; and the meaning in both cases is practically identical. The constraining power of the love of Christ over Paul goes back to the decision that “all (among whom is Paul) died”—died in the death of Christ for them. His death was the supreme proof of His love (John xv. 13) ; He died for all, and all—at any rate all who appropriate His death—died in Him, died to their old self and its interests ; and for all such, dead to their

should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

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former self, and constrained by the love of Christ, selfishness is for ever impossible. *One for all*: Christ is unique, the head of a new humanity, which, dying in His death, rises to a new life. “*For all*” does not quite mean *instead of* all, as *ινπέρ* is not equivalent to *ἀντί*: rather it means, for the advantage of all, that is, for the forgiveness of their sin, and their reconciliation to God (ver. 19). **And He died for all, in order that those who live should live no more to themselves, but to Him who for them died and was raised.** Here is explicitly stated the object of His death, that men should die to self and live to Him. His death is not only the supreme rebuke of selfishness, but its annihilation. *οἱ ζῶντες* (those who live) is not a circumlocution for “all men,” it means those who are now living the new *life* that followed their death with Christ. This life is for Him, and not for themselves: they live for Him *who died for them*. Did he also rise again for them? In other words, is *καὶ ἐγερθέντι* added simply to complete the picture of the risen, living Lord, to whom the service of the redeemed is due? or is *ινπέρ αἰτῶν* to be taken with these words as well as with *τῷ ἀποθανόντι*—to Him who for their sakes both died and rose again? Rom. iv. 25 seems to look in the latter direction, according to which “He was raised for our justification.”

It says very little for human nature that such a man as Paul should have had to defend himself against the imputations of a selfish policy. If ever a man forgot and denied himself in the effort to serve and assert his Master, that man was Paul. Here he urges two motives, either of which would render any other conduct on his part altogether inconceivable. One is the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ, at the end, and the ever-present scrutiny of God here and now, before whom all his inner life is bare; the other is the thought of the infinite love of Christ, supremely manifested in His death. That love left him no alternative but to live for Him who had died for him; and he lived for Him when he lived for those others for whom He had also died. This love was the destruction of every seed of selfishness; it grasped his life round and round,

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after

it constrained him. Henceforth he can only live "no longer for himself, but for Him who died for all" and therefore for him; in another aspect, he lives *ιμίν* (*to you*; ver. 13). It is the advantage, the salvation (*ίνα σωθῶσιν*, I Cor. x. 33) of others, that he now unintermittently considers. No other course is possible, for self is dead.

*The New World* (ver. 16, 17).

16. These two verses powerfully elaborate the idea, suggested by the last two, of the infinitely far-reaching effects of the death of Christ. In His death all died, and all the external distinctions that separate men are annihilated. So that as for us (*ἵμεῖς*), however much stress my opponents may lay upon their connection with the Jerusalem church and the apostles, or perhaps upon their acquaintance with Jesus Himself, from henceforth (that is, from the moment in which Paul saw the real meaning of the death of Christ, ver. 14), we refuse, in our estimate of men in general and even of Christ in particular, to give any weight to such external and accidental things—we know no man after the flesh, not even Christ: though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more. To know a man *after the flesh* is to attach importance, in our estimate of him, to that which is, truly considered, but superficial; it is to look at the face, not the heart (ver. 12): it is to see the gentile as a gentile, the Jew as a Jew, the slave as a slave, and to fail to recognize their deep common humanity, their oneness when seen in relation to Christ. External distinctions, when seen in this light, become irrelevant. Nay, so little weight do externals now carry for Paul that he makes no exception even in the case of Christ: "we know Him after the flesh no more." The words "though we have known Christ after the flesh" certainly seem at first sight to imply that there was a time in Paul's life when he did so know Him, and when perhaps he laid the same kind of stress upon his acquaintance with the external facts of Jesus' life as his opponents are now doing. But it is difficult to find any period in Paul's life which such a confession naturally fits. It

the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new

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can hardly be referred to the period before his conversion (though he may not impossibly have seen Jesus in Jerusalem), for in that case he would probably have mentioned it in xi. 22-33, where for the moment he "glories a little after the flesh." Nor is it easy to suppose that the allusion is to the period immediately after his conversion, for there is no trace that Paul's thoughts of Christ ever essentially changed, nor is it probable that they underwent a change in this respect. It has been suggested that the way out of the difficulty is to interpret *Xριστόν* as the Messiah rather than as the historical Christ ; the meaning would then be that formerly, before his conversion, his thoughts of the Messiah were carnal, centring, for example, round his Jewish origin, his Davidic descent, etc., but that these imaginations were destroyed by his vision of Jesus, the true Messiah, and especially of the universal bearing of His death. But considering that in the very next verse, the word "Christ" unmistakably refers to the historical Saviour, this explanation must be pronounced quite impossible. There seems no other alternative than to suppose that Paul is stating his case hypothetically—he repudiates appeals to externals, *even in the case of Christ* ; the assertion becomes all the more pointed, when we remember that this was just the appeal which his opponents were fond of making.

17. In many ways, and especially by His death (ver. 15), Christ had transformed the world for Paul. Old distinctions were annihilated ; externals, which once bulked, now became irrelevant ; the man *in Christ* was new, and the world upon which he looked was new. **So that if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation** (cf. Gal. vi. 15) ; **the old things passed** (*παρῆλθεν*, aorist), the moment he came to be in Christ, **see ! they have become NEW.** It is one thing to be *of* Christ (cf. 1 Cor. i. 12), to belong to the Christ-party ; it is another and a very different thing to be *in* Christ. One might have heard Him preach, and watched His cures, and touched the hem of His garment, and yet be far enough from the kingdom of heaven, far enough from being a "new creation" ;

creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.

to be this, one must be *in* Him. But the moment one is in Him (cf. *κρίναντας τοῦτο*, ver. 14), then the man and his world are transformed : he is new (*καὶ νῦν*), it is new (*καὶ νῦν*) ; and the abounding surprise and joy, as the new man looks out upon his new world, are graphically depicted, in true Hebraic fashion, by the word *ἰδού*, behold ! see ! There is a fine comprehensiveness about the neut. plur. adj. *ἀπχαῖα*—old habits, customs, sins, old estimates of men and of Jesus, have all passed away for the man who is in Christ. The following verses suggest that there is here a backward glance at the elaborate contrast Paul had drawn in ch. iii. between the Jewish and the Christian dispensation.

To Paul history is divided in two by the death of Christ. By that event the distinctions upon which the world loves to lay stress, were obliterated, and, in the light of that, the external things that separate man from man became an irrelevance. Nay, even the external things of Christ's own life, Paul seems to say, are to receive no emphasis : one may accentuate these, and be far enough from Christ after all. The real importance attaches not to the facts of Christ's life, but to the *fact* of Christ Himself, as a risen (*ἐγερθέντι*, ver. 15) living Lord, operating in the life that yields to Him. Of course it would be possible to make too absolute the distinction between the risen Christ and the historical Jesus ; if, in the complete absence of the historical records of His life, we knew nothing whatever of Jesus, how much should we know of the living Christ ? At the same time, there is a knowledge of the facts which has no Christian value : it is possible to know them, without being touched by the power within them — such is knowledge “after the flesh.” Paul certainly must have been thoroughly familiar with the facts of Jesus' life and teaching : the story would, from the beginning, be the common property of all the churches. He had not probably been personally acquainted with Jesus, but he understood Him infinitely better than many of those who had been. The fact that our gospels satisfy to so comparatively slender a degree our curiosity about the external facts of the life of Jesus,

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ;

shows that the feeling to which Paul here gives expression was beginning to be widely prevalent—the feeling that only those facts were of value which revealed the spirit and power and purpose of Jesus Himself: other knowledge was “after the flesh.”

*The Reconciliation (v. 18–21).*

The key-note of this section is the thought of *reconciliation*, a word which occurs, whether as a noun or as a verb, no less than four times. The passage is written in a state of exuberant feeling, as Paul contemplates the new world (ver. 17) which has been created and into which he has been brought by the reconciliation of God manifested in and effected through Christ. Christ is indeed the medium (*διά*, ver. 18) but God is the ultimate agent and source (*ἐκ*) of the reconciliation.

18. But all those new things, of which Paul has just spoken, proceed from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and, that others might learn the good news, gave us the ministry of reconciliation. A reconciliation was necessary, because without it and before it, men are “enemies” of God (Rom. v. 10). But, according to Paul, the obstacle to be overcome consists not only in the enmity of man; there is also something to be overcome on the side of God. When he says that, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, he does not only mean that the goodness of God, as manifested in Christ, disarmed men’s hostility, and inspired them with trust and confidence in Himself, but that in Christ, who “for us was made sin” (ver. 21), and who, as such, “died for us all” (ver. 14), God’s condemnation of sin was put away. The reconciliation is not one which we offer or which we work out for ourselves; it is one which we “receive” (*τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν*, Rom. v. 11). It is interesting to note the blend of general and particular expressions throughout this paragraph: God was reconciling *the world*, He reconciled *us*; He does not reckon into *them* their trespasses, He gave *us* the ministry of reconciliation. Paul has an overwhelming consciousness of personally sharing in the reconciliation accomplished by

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as

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God through Christ, but he has an equally glad consciousness of the special honour that is his, in having entrusted to him *the ministry of reconciliation*, that is, in being called to the service of preaching (*λόγον*, ver. 20) through which the knowledge of this reconciliation is communicated to men.

19. Christ is the medium of reconciliation, but *God* is its ultimate source, just as the consummation of history is that *God* is to be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28). In verse 19, therefore, Θεός in the emphatic position, points suggestively back to *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* (from *God*) : the combination of *ὡς ὅτι* is very unusual, and it has been suggested that *ὅτι* (that) is really a gloss added to explain *ὡς* (because)—probably, however, the words simply mean “seeing that.” The reconciliation and the appointment to the ministry thereof (ver. 18) were God’s doing, *seeing that it was God who, in Christ, was in the act of reconciling* (pres. partic.) *the world to Himself*. The punctuation of A.V. with a comma after Christ, creates a false impression. The *ἦν* (*was*) goes not with *ἐν Χριστῷ*, but with *καταλλάσσων* (reconciling), and is more graphic than the simple imperfect *κατήλλασσεν* would have been ; it emphasizes not the fact of the reconciliation, but the activity of God in it, the reconciling *process*. As before, Christ was sent to die for *all* (ver. 14), so here it is the whole *world* that was being reconciled in Him. The effect of the reconciliation, and the practical proof of it are twofold ; in reconciling men to Himself, He is **not reckoning unto them their trespasses**—there is the perpetual forgiveness of sins (*present* partic.) ; and again God revealed the reconciliation in *having put in our hands* (lit. *in us*) **the word of reconciliation**, (the *aorist* partic. *θέμενος*, like *δάντος* in ver. 18 suggests the definite appointment of Paul to proclaim the reconciliation).

20. The thought of his commission to *proclaim* (*λόγον*) the reconciliation suggests to Paul the idea that he is Christ’s ambassador. **We are ambassadors therefore for Christ**—on His behalf—the same preposition (*ὑπὲρ*) as above (ver. 14),

though God did beseech *you* by us : we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

where Christ died *for* all, on their behalf. The reconciliation of the world to God is wrought through and in Christ, so that it is Christ and His cause that Paul, in his apostolic capacity, represents ; but as it is God who has entrusted him with the word of reconciliation, in a sense it is God who is speaking through him, it is as though God were entreating by us. There is here the same consciousness as that of the old Hebrew prophets, when they prefaced their messages with "Thus saith the Lord." **We beseech you on behalf of Christ**, that is, that the work of Christ be not frustrated by your failure to appropriate it. The burden of Paul's message as Christ's ambassador is, **Be reconciled to God**. This does not mean : As you look at the reconciling love of God as manifested in Christ, cleanse your hearts of all hostility and distrust. The reconciliation is one effected by *God Himself* (vers. 18, 19), one which we receive (Rom. v. 11). The phrase therefore means, Accept the reconciliation provided by God : those who accept it are *reconciled to God*, and their hostility and distrust are disarmed as a consequence. This appeal of Paul's is more than a general appeal to the unconverted world (*κόσμον*, ver. 19) ; it had no doubt a specific application within the Corinthian church (cf. vi. 1, xi. 3).

21. Some MSS. connect this verse with the preceding by γάρ (*for* ; cf. A.V.) : the omission of γάρ, however, gives a much more impressive sentence, it makes the contents of the verse stand boldly out as an independent summary of Paul's evangelical message. **Him who knew not sin He made to be sin on our behalf** (*ὑπερ*, cf. ver 14) **that WE** (*ἴμεις*) **might become the righteousness of God in Him**. Both in point of style and of thought, this sentence is extremely bold. Paul does not say that Jesus was made a sinner nor even a sin-offering, nor does he say that he became righteous ; he says something much profounder —Jesus was made *sin*, and we become *righteousness*. He was not and could not have been made a sinner, but He was completely identified with human sin ; and with the same completeness

## CHAPTER VI

1 WE then, *as workers together with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

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as He was identified with human sin are we identified with the divine righteousness—only of course *in Him*, in union with Him; without Him we could never attain to it—it is ours, we become it, in Him. These striking and original words show that Paul means much more than the imputation of human sin to Christ, and the imputation of divine righteousness to men : the sin is not merely regarded as laid on Him, nor the righteousness as conferred on us, but there is in both cases an inner identification, as it were—of Him with sin, and of us with righteousness. This, then, is the heart of the gospel, according to Paul, this explains the reconciliation on which throughout the paragraph he has so frequently and earnestly insisted. We are acquitted, justified, in Christ ; but, in order to this, He had to be made sin. We could never have been identified with Him and His righteousness, had He not first been identified with us and our sin. We climb the heights, because He descended to the depths.

*A Ministry Without Offence* (vi. 1-10).

As one to whom reconciliation is everything, Paul is peculiarly anxious that the Corinthians should not render it ineffective, in their case, by their apathetic acceptance of it. He warns them against this danger, shows how careful he has himself been to live worthily of the grace bestowed upon him and to preserve his ministry from reproach or suspicion, and he thus gradually drifts into a noble and eloquent statement of his conduct amid the sufferings, persecutions, and misunderstandings, incidental to his ministry.

1. Paul is not only an ambassador (v. 20), but *a worker*, though his work takes the form largely of *entreaty*. **And working together we also entreat YOU** (*ιμᾶς*, in emphatic position at end of sentence ; this is a direct and special appeal to the Corinthians ; cf. ver. 11, where they are directly addressed) **not**

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

**to receive the grace of God**, as manifested in the reconciliation of which Paul has just spoken, *in vain*. It is offered freely, but it is received *in vain*, unless the recipient allows it to control, inspire, and fructify his life, as Paul shows himself to have done in the verses that follow, where he claims to “give no offence in anything.” The proof that he had not received that grace in vain was written large in the steadfast patience with which he had borne his hardships, in his purity, love, etc. Where these or similar fruits are absent, the grace of God has been received in vain. It is not quite clear whom Paul claims in *συνεργοῦντες* to be working with—perhaps the Corinthians, but more probably God Himself (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 9), as here Paul does what in v. 20 God is said to do through him (*παρακαλεῖν*, entreat, in both cases).

2. Parenthetically Paul inserts a quotation from Isaiah xlix. 8 (suggested perhaps by the verb he has just used *δέξασθαι*, cf. *δέκτω*) designed to remind his readers of the folly of delay, and the importance of a sincere acceptance of the grace of God *now*. **For He saith** (God or scripture)

**At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee,  
And on the day of salvation I helped thee.**

In Isaiah, these words are addressed to the servant of Jehovah. It is not necessary to suppose that Paul regarded them as prophetic; he avails himself of the ancient words probably only because they happily express his meaning. The tension of Paul’s feeling, as he writes, is dramatically suggested by the abrupt and repeated *ἰδού* (*behold*; cf. a few verses before, v. 17). **Behold, NOW is the “acceptable time”;** **behold, NOW is the “day of salvation.”** *Salvation* has been brought by Christ, and *now* is the Christian dispensation, rather than “to-day”; (cf. Heb. iii. 7 ff.) but the word has the moral effect of to-day, because, till the coming again of Christ as judge (cf. v. 10) the time is short (1 Cor. vii. 29).

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry  
be not blamed :

4 But in all *things* approving ourselves as the  
ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in  
necessities, in distresses.

3, 4. After the parenthesis emphasizing the importance of an immediate and sincere acceptance of the grace of God, Paul goes on to indicate the temper of his own ministry, the spirit in which he "co-operated" with God : giving no cause at all for stumbling in anything, that the (*i.e. my*) ministry be not exposed to reproach. Paul knows that there are critical and unfriendly eyes upon him, which would rejoice to see something in his conduct inconsistent with his profession ; he also knows the Christian ministry is a very honourable office, and must be jealously guarded from even the possibility of reproach. He is scrupulously careful so to live that the Corinthians will find no reason, in his conduct at any rate, for shaking off their obligation to accept his gospel. But not only, negatively, is he careful to avoid giving offence in anything (*μηδενί*), but, on the positive side he is equally earnest and careful to advance the cause of Christ, whose ambassador he is (v. 20), by every means in his power, in **everything** (*παντὶ* : he is as thorough on the positive as on the negative side) **commanding ourselves, as God's ministers** should—not commanding ourselves as God's ministers (which would be *διακόνους*, accusative), but commanding ourselves, as ministers (*διάκονοι*, nomin.) of God ought to commend themselves. The ministry and the minister must alike be above reproach : *noblesse oblige*.

4. In proceeding to show the many ways in which he "commends" himself, Paul develops, with simple eloquence, a graphic sketch of the conditions under which and the spirit in which he does his apostolic work—a sketch which reminds us of the cognate description in iv. 8-11 (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 9-13), and which is more highly elaborated in xi. 22-33. The circumstances of the work, the opposition, persecution, pain, hardships, and privations he had to encounter are dealt with in verses 4 and 5 in a series of phrases, each introduced by *ἐν* ; these were met in a spirit of patience and heroic *steadfastness*

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings ;

(*ὑπομονή*), which is therefore appropriately mentioned first. It was by this that he commended his ministry, without this it would have been exposed to reproach (*μωμηθῆ*, ver. 3). In much stedfastness; this idea governs the nine phrases that follow, which fall naturally into groups of three : (a) in tribulations (lit. crushings), in necessities, in distresses—words suggesting the pressure and constraint of circumstances, in virtue of which he was sometimes driven into a “narrow place.” “The prevailing idea,” as Stanley says, “is of pressure and confinement; each stage being narrower than the one before, so that no room is left for movement or escape.”

5. The next group (b) is more specific and definite ; in three graphic words we see how keen and cruel was the opposition Paul had to encounter, and what it cost to be an apostle. In stripes, such as were administered to Paul and Silas at Philippi (Acts xvi. 23), in imprisonments, such as he had also to endure at Philippi after the stripes (both these words occur together in Acts xvi. 23—“when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison”), in tumults, such as that stirred up against Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 50). *ἀκαταστασίαι* has been understood of Paul’s unsettled life; a certain colour is given to this explanation by the use of the verb *ἀσταῦμεν* in 1 Cor. iv. 11, which is coupled as here, with the idea of “toil” (*κοπιῶμεν, ἐν κόποις*) ; but the general usage of the noun in the New Testament (*confusion*, as in 1 Cor. xiv. 33 ; *tumult*, as in Luke xxi. 9) is not favourable to this interpretation.

As the second group (b) dealt with the sufferings Paul had to endure from determined opponents, the third (c) deals with the bodily hardships which he voluntarily took upon himself : in labours—hard work, perhaps manual (Acts xviii. 3) but more probably the reference is to all the strenuous work the apostle undertook for the gospel’s sake : in watchings, probably not vigils, but suggesting, in a large way, all the night-toil, which was involved for Paul in his ministry of the gospel (Acts xx. 31) ; in fastings. Though it has been argued on the basis of xi. 27 that a distinction must be drawn between fasting and

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering,  
by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,  
7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by

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hunger, and that in the passage before us voluntary fasting, as a self-imposed discipline, is intended, it is more probable that the word here (as probably also in xi. 27) is practically equivalent to "hunger." Note that each of the nine nouns in all three groups is in the plural ; the implication is that these hard experiences were not isolated, but frequent and familiar.

6, 7. The next eight phrases, like the preceding ten, are introduced by *εν* ; but they are of a different nature. They indicate not the circumstances of his ministry, but its spirit. Those hardships, which would have crushed the life out of many a man, but furnished Paul with an opportunity to display the transcendent quality of his inner life. It is by this that he chiefly "commends himself as a minister of God"—in his general inward purity, though there may not impossibly be a latent reference to his chastity—in this case there would be subtle rebuke of the moral laxity of the Corinthians ; in his knowledge, peculiarly intimate and profound, of the gospel and the gracious will of God ; in the long-suffering which he manifested amid persecution and insult ; in his gentle kindness ; in the holy spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God. The Twentieth Century New Testament neatly renders the last four phrases thus : "(We recommend ourselves also) by a spirit which is holy, a love which is sincere, a teaching which is true, and an energy which is divine." But it may be doubted whether the words *εν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ* ought not to be rendered "in the holy spirit." Considering the preceding words, which express qualities of Paul's own inner life, there is certainly a strong temptation to translate "by a holy spirit"—that is, his ministry was characterized by a holiness of spirit. But it is perhaps, on the whole, more natural to regard the holy spirit as the source of the moral qualities just enumerated, and in particular of the love unfeigned, the greatest of the virtues (I Cor. xiii.) which immediately follows. There was no *hypocrisy* (*λανυποκρίτης*) about Paul's love : it was not a *mask* to hide other feelings. He commends himself "in the word of truth" ; this has been

the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and *yet* true ;

taken to mean “by speaking what is true” (cf. *Twent. Cent. New Test.* just quoted); but there is nothing in the grammar to keep it from meaning simply *in the gospel*: this is the word of truth, it is also *the power of God*. The latter phrase, however (*ἐν δυνάμει Θεοῦ*), may refer to the power with which Paul proclaims his truth—a power which has its source in God.

The eighteen phrases introduced by *ἐν* now give place to three, prefaced by *διὰ*, which further illustrate the way in which Paul “commends” himself and his ministry—not only in hardships, not only by the inner quality of his life, but **by means of (διὰ) the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.** Paul’s Christian life is a struggle, a battle, and for this he needs armour—an idea much more fully elaborated in Eph. vi. 10–17. His weapons are weapons of *righteousness*, that is, supplied by righteousness, or perhaps consisting in righteousness. His good character (flowing, of course, from the holy spirit, ver. 6) is his equipment: it furnishes him with weapons offensive, like the sword and the spear, *on the right hand*, and defensive, like the shield, *on the left*.

8. The *διὰ* of the next two clauses has hardly the same sense as in the first clause; not so much “by means of,” but rather **through**, that is, *amid, glory and dishonour, through evil and good repute*, Paul commends himself and his ministry. “Whether men judge well of thee, or ill,” says Thomas à Kempis, “thou art not on that account other than thyself.” So whether men *speak well* (*εὐφημία*) of Paul or ill, he always commended himself as a minister of God. Their words were a criticism not of him but of themselves: they revealed not the truth about Paul, but their own attitude to the gospel. Through glory and dishonour, through good and evil repute, he went steadily on his way, commanding his gospel by his patience and purity, by his fidelity and love unfeigned, by the righteousness which girded him on the right hand and on the left.

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed.

10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor,

**9, 10.** The remaining clauses, which are seven in number, take an antithetic form, and are each introduced by *ως*. This group concludes the description of the way in which Paul and those like-minded with him commended themselves. Each of the clauses contrasts the appearance with the deeper reality. **As deceivers**—he had been charged with handling the word of God deceitfully (iv. 2, cf. ii. 17)—**and yet true**; **as being**, in the spiteful judgment of his opponents, **unknown** and obscure, “without proper credentials,” **and yet**, as a matter of fact, **well known**, and acknowledged, among all true believers, by “the power of God” (ver. 7) which wrought and spoke (v. 20) so manifestly through him. **As dying**, **and BEHOLD** (cf. v. 17, vi. 2), far from dying we live (cf. Ps. cxviii. 17). We have already seen how the hazards of the apostle’s career turned his life literally into a continual process of dying (iv. 10, 11) even bringing him sometimes to the point of death (i. 8). He looked like (*ως*) a man marked for death, and his enemies would have wished him dead, but, behold! he lives, by the virtue of the invincible “life of Jesus” which was in him (iv. 10). **As being chastised**, **and yet not killed**. His opponents may have pointed to his afflictions and hardships as proof that he was under the heavy hand of God. Paul does not deny the divine discipline (cf. xii. 21)—this is as real as the “dying” of the previous clause—but, in words suggested by Psalm cxviii. 18,—he maintains that “he is not being delivered over to death.” **As being grieved** not only in the estimation of his opponents, but in reality, **yet rejoicing evermore**; **as paupers**, **yet enriching many**; **as having nothing**, **yet having firm** (*κατέχοντες*) **possession of all things**. It is the literal truth that Paul was “poor,” and “had nothing”; he even refused to avail himself of the support which he had a right to demand from the Corinthian church (1 Cor. ix. 12–18); yet in him there was a wealth of inner resource (cf. vv. 6, 7), and with these spiritual gifts he was able to enrich others. And though he had nothing, he yet held (*κατέχω* stronger than *ἐχω*) **all**

yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

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things : all things were his, for he was Christ's (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

It is wonderful to watch the heights to which Paul gradually rises from the simple statement that, for the sake of his ministry, he is careful to "give no offence in anything." From this modest and negative utterance he passes to the positive statement that he makes a point of commanding himself in everything, as a minister of God should do. Then there flashes upon him his whole apostolic career, with its infinite variety of experience : he surveys it, in rapid and breathless eloquence, touching on the fierceness of the opposition he had to encounter, and the keenness of the hardships he had to endure, then on the spirit in which he had encountered, and endured, and achieved it all, then upon the paradoxes—death and life, impotence and power, sorrow and joy, poverty and wealth—which were so marvellously reconciled in his own person. He who had been put in prison after receiving many stripes, he who had suffered hunger and sleeplessness and hardship of every kind, is conscious that his life is, despite all seeming, one of power and triumph, and ends by describing himself as the possessor of all things. Truly here is one who has overcome the world.

It is to be noted, too, that we owe this splendid statement of Paul's apostolic career, in its outward and inward aspects, to his simple desire to show how he has sought to commend himself as a servant of God, and to preserve his ministry from reproach. *In everything* he commended that ministry. Every new experience, whether of persecution or hunger or calumny, gave him a fresh opportunity to show the patience, the purity, and the unfeigned love which inspired all his service of men in the gospel. This was his response to the reconciliation wrought out in Christ (v. 19)—that supreme exhibition of the "grace of God," which Paul assuredly had not "received in vain" (ver. 1). And upon all, whether, like Paul, ambassadors for Christ and preachers of the gospel or not, the same unfeigned and enthusiastic response is obligatory.

## THE RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN PAUL AND THE CORINTHIANS (vi. 11-vii. 16)

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you,  
our heart is enlarged,

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*Paul's Affectionate Appeal (vi. 11-13).*

In the passage we have just been considering, Paul had been led, almost insensibly, to open his heart with unusual fulness to the Corinthians. He had given them a real glimpse into the nature and the secret of his ministry; and he now appeals to them to treat him with the same candour, warmth, and open-heartedness as he had treated them. The strong and tender feeling by which he is moved, as he writes, comes out in his use of the very unusual personal address "Corinthians"—the only occasion in the two epistles in which he addresses them by name (cf. Gal. iii. 1, Phil. iv. 15).

**11-13. Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians.** The phrase is more than a synonym for "we have spoken to you"; in this context it suggests the great warmth and frankness with which the last paragraph had been written, and by which the apostle's heart is still moved (note the *perfect* tense, *ἀνέῳγειν*). A true man's words are, of course, an index to his heart, for out of the *heart* the *mouth* speaketh: hence the *open* candid *mouth* has, as its counterpart, the *large* warm *heart*—**our heart is enlarged**, has been, so to speak, enlarged (perf. *πεπλάτυνται*) as he wrote the last paragraph; not that he loves them any more dearly than he did—that would be impossible—but his emotion has broken forth into exuberant expression, and he takes the opportunity to assure them of the great place they have in his heart. His converts are always in his heart (vii. 3, cf. Phil. i. 7); he assures them

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

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that they have plenty of room there—his is a large *broad* heart. And if there is any sense of constraint in their relations with him, they may rest assured that it is altogether on their side, and not at all on his. For it is not in us that you are cramped, it is in your own hearts, in your own affections, that you are cramped; my heart is *broad*, it is yours that is narrow (*στενοχωρεῖσθε*), and so warm, generous, and affectionate a nature as Paul's is hurt when its candour is received with reserve or suspicion. He expects from them the same (*τὴν αὐτὴν*) openness which he has shown them: it is his *due* (*ἀντιμοσθίαν*), especially as they stand to him as *children* (*τέκνοις*) to a father. *τὴν αὐτὴν ἀντιμοσθίαν*, a sort of accusative of the remoter object, combines the ideas of “in the same way” and “by way of recompense”—he expects to be *rewarded* with the same affection as he has shown them. Now recompense me similarly—I speak as to children from whom I, as a father, have the right to expect this recompense—by YOUR (*καὶ ὑμεῖς*) enlargement (of heart) (literally, “in the same way, as compensation, be ye also enlarged”). The repetition of the verb *enlarge* is very effective: in his heart there is room for them, in theirs there ought also (*καὶ*) to be room for him. Nor is this unreasonable, it is no unjust or heavy burden that he lays upon them. He is not their tyrant (cf. i. 24) but their father, and asks no more from them than that candour and love which, as his children, they should be glad to give.

These few brief words show how human and friendly the apostle was, how deeply pained he was by misunderstanding and reserve on the part of those whom he loved, and how sorely he hungered for their affection. He gave them a great place in his own heart, and he could not bear to have but a little place in theirs. He needed from others the affection which he lavished upon others.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ?

*The Duty of Separation from Anti-christian Influences*  
(vi. 14-vii. 1).

The least critical reader can hardly fail to be surprised by this paragraph in its present context. Its theme is the duty of the Corinthians to separate themselves from the unclean heathen influences by which they are surrounded. But immediately before Paul has been earnestly pleading for a larger place in the affections of the Corinthians, and in the paragraph that follows (vii. 2 ff.) this general thought is continued, and the opening metaphor is thoroughly cognate to those in verses 11-13 ("make room for us"). Even if the passage vi. 14-vii. 1 be Paul's, it is difficult to suppose that, interrupting as it does the continuity of the context on both sides, this was its original place. But let us first examine the passage more closely.

**14. Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers.** The present tense (*γίνεσθε*) and the use of the word *become* instead of *be*, yields a much more graphic sense than that supplied by the English versions—"do not let yourselves become entangled with incongruous alliances." The abruptness of this sudden injunction is very striking, and, in the context, exceedingly difficult to explain. It is just possible that there may be a backward glance at vi. 1, in which the apostle had entreated his converts to see that they did not receive the grace of God in vain : this would happen if they deliberately allied themselves with their heathen neighbours. The word *έτεροζυγοῦντες*, yoked with one of another and different kind, recalls Leviticus xix. 19 (the more so as there is a direct quotation from Lev. in ver. 16)—"Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender *with a diverse kind*," where the Septuagint uses the corresponding adjective *έτεροζύγω*; the *idea* of the verse, though not its language, recalls Deuteronomy xxii. 10 "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." The *ἄπιστοι*, unbelievers, are the heathen who *do not believe* the Christian gospel ; for a Christian to be associated with them

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God;

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would be an incongruity of the same sort as when animals of different kinds are yoked together. No specific alliance is suggested by the passage. In 1 Cor. v. 10, vii. 12, x. 27, it is admitted that in Corinth the breach with heathen society could not be absolute; and this passage has consequently been interpreted as an injunction to avoid deliberate association with heathenism,—such, for example, as would be involved in marrying a heathen woman, or in taking part in heathen sacrificial meals, say at club-meetings. On the other hand, verse 17 seems to imply that the breach with heathen society must be absolute.

**14-16.** There follows a series of five questions, in which the great contrasts of the moral life are rhetorically stated with much power and variety. **For what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness?** Sin is defined in 1 John iii. 4 as *ἀροπία*, lawlessness, disregard of the divine law, a disregard which often expresses itself practically as “uncleanness” (Rom vi. 19, *ἀκαθαρσία*; cf. here ver. 17, *ἀκαθάρτου*, primarily ceremonial, but also moral uncleanness). The Christian’s life is clean, moral, *righteous*. **Or what communion is there between the light in which the Christian walks, and the darkness in which unbelievers live, and which, being evil, they love?** These abstract expressions are now replaced by concrete; the principles of good and evil, light and darkness, are embodied in persons, most conspicuously in the two great protagonists of the moral struggle—*Christ* and *Satan*, here called *Belial*, or rather *Beliar* (by a not unexampled change of *l* for *r*). **And what harmony has Christ with Belial?** The original meaning of the word *Belial* is obscure. In the Greek version of the Old Testament, it is never rendered by a proper noun, always by some common noun: Psalm xviii. 4, 5, however, makes it probable that *Belial* was originally conceived personally (as in our passage)—apparently as a god of death or of the underworld. He is regarded here as the great antagonist of *Christ*. The contrast between the two great leaders, *Christ* and *Belial*, now passes into a contrast

as God hath said, I will dwell in *them*, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be

between their human representatives, the *believer* and the *unbeliever*: or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? what do they share in common ? Nothing. And what agreement has the (rather than *a*) temple of God with idols? The moment the idol appears in the temple, it ceases to be a temple of God ; the lifeless idol and the living (*ζῶντος*) God are incompatible. The holiness of the temple must be maintained ; then he clinches his argument by adding “we are the temple,” it is therefore *our* holiness that must be maintained and preserved from pollution.

16-17. For WE (*ὑμεῖς*) Christians are the temple of the LIVING God ; the position of *ζῶντος* (living) shows that an emphatic contrast is suggested with the lifeless idols. Some MSS. (followed by A.V.) read *ὑμεῖς . . . ἐστε* (*you are*) ; cf. I Cor. iii. 16 for the same idea, and I Cor. vi. 19, where impurity desecrates the temple of the body. The Christian church is the true temple of God ; in it God dwells, it must therefore be holy as He is holy. This point is now elaborated by several apposite quotations from different parts of the Old Testament, and into the ancient words a richer meaning is poured than that which they originally contained. The quotations are separated by introductory formulae, “God said,” “saith the Lord Almighty,” etc. As God said (that), “I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.” This is a quotation from Lev. xxvi. (11) 12 (affected perhaps slightly by Ezek. xxxvii. 27), according to which Jehovah is to dwell among His people on condition of obedience ; but characteristically His presence is locally associated with the tabernacle. In the use made of the quotation, this local limitation falls away. Wherefore, that is, because the people must be holy, as their God is holy, “Come out from among them, and separate yourselves,” saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing at all (notice present, *ἄττρεσθε*). This is a free citation of Isaiah lii. 11, in which the prophet appeals to the people, more particularly to the priests as those

ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

"who bear the vessels of Jehovah," to go forth from *Babylon*, being careful to preserve their sanctity from pollution by contact with *ceremonially* unclean things. Here again the scope of the quotation is widened; it is an appeal to abandon all *heathen* associations, and to preserve themselves from *moral* uncleanness. The *decisiveness* of the departure (*ἴξιλθατε*) and of the rupture with their polluted environment (*ἀφορ.*) is well suggested by the aorist, just as the present (*ἄπτεσθε*) brings out the *continual* avoidance of contact with unclean things.

17, 18. But the divine life is not a privation and a negation. If there is a call to separate ourselves from one fellowship, there is also a promise that we shall be adopted into another: **and I will receive you**—to *sonship*, as the next clause shows. These words might be a loose reproduction of the idea in Isaiah lii. 12, but it is more probable that they are a reminiscence of Ezekiel xx. 34, where, in the Septuagint, the very same words occur ("I will welcome you out of the countries, wherein ye are scattered"). **And I will be to you a father, and as for you (ὑμεῖς) ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.** This passage is modelled on 2 Sam. vii. 14. There it is a divine promise concerning the offspring of David ("I will be his father, and he shall be my son"); here it is widened to include all *believers* (ver. 15) who make an absolute break with heathendom—men and women alike: the addition of *and daughters* (cf. Isaiah xlivi. 6) shows how wide is the sweep of this new society, whose members are brethren and sisters, and whose father is God. The concluding words "saith the Lord Almighty" (= "the Lord of Hosts" of the Old Testament), are used in 2 Sam. vii. 8 to introduce the speech from which the last quotation is taken. Coming at the end of this great series of promises, they make a very powerful impression. God is the *Lord Almighty*, and *Lord of Hosts*, and the infinite resources of which He is master are a sufficient guarantee for the fulfilment of the promises, daring as they are.

## CHAPTER VII

I HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1. If God has called men to separation, he has also pledged Himself to be their Father, and has called them into a glorious fellowship with His other sons and daughters. The writer's heart is deeply moved, as he thinks of the wonder of those promises ; in the strength of them, it should surely be no hard thing to shake oneself definitely free, once and for all, from all polluting associations, and to move steadily and unreluctantly on in the path of holiness. **Seeing then, beloved** (for the tender word, cf. above ver. 11, "Corinthians") that we have promises like THESE (*ταῦτας* emphatic) let us cleanse ourselves—it is worthy of note that the writer, as a Christian brother, includes himself in his exhortation—from every pollution of flesh and spirit, carrying holiness to completion in the fear of God. As before (see vi. 17) the decisive breach with the things that pollute is suggestively expressed by the aorist (*καθαρίσωμεν*), and the long continuity of the process of sanctification is brought out by the present (*ἐπιτελοῦντες*). The moral life is positive as well as negative. It demands not only a cleansing from pollution, but the ceaseless practice of holiness ; and this effort, alike on its negative and its positive side, can only be effectively made in the atmosphere of *the fear of God* (cf. v. 1).

The genuineness of this whole passage has been frequently and seriously contested. As we have already seen, it can scarcely be denied that it breaks into the context in a rather inexplicable way. It is also maintained that the rhetorical accumulation of practically synonymous phrases in verses 14, 15, is quite unlike Paul ; still more serious is the objection that the injunction to the Corinthians in vii. 1 to cleanse themselves from every pollution of *flesh and spirit* is not in the manner of Paul. "In other places," says Bousset (who, however, in spite of the difficulties, decides on the whole for the Pauline author-

ship of the section), "where Paul names flesh and spirit together, he understands by flesh the radically sinful sensuousness, which therefore, in the strict sense, can not be cleansed from pollution ; and by spirit the divine spirit, which is not exposed to the danger of pollution." Professor Denney seems to hit the truth, when he says that though those words "undoubtedly tend to become technical in his mind, yet words so universally and so vaguely used could never become simply technical. If any contemporary of Paul could have written, 'let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit,' then Paul himself could have written it" (*Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 239).

Every candid scholar feels that the difficulties of the passage are serious, but they do not seem to be so overwhelming as to preclude altogether the possibility of a Pauline origin. The difference in theme between this and the surrounding context could be explained by assuming that Paul had been interrupted when he had finished ver. 13, and that something had happened before he resumed his letter which made the introduction of such an appeal apposite. Or he may have added this passage for a similar reason, after re-reading his completed letter. It has also been acutely suggested that this passage may have been a fragment of the letter alluded to in 1 Cor. v. 9. Probably the real truth will never be known.

Whether Paul's or not, the passage sets before us some of the fundamental truths of the Bible. One is the infinite difference between good and evil, and the impossibility of compromise. On this point the teaching of the Bible is very stern and unmistakable. As in the first Psalm, there are only two classes, the righteous and the wicked ; and the infinite difference in their characters will be matched by an infinite difference in their destinies (Ps. i. 6). The man who thinks he is neutral is really on the wrong side. As Martineau has said, "At first sight, nothing can well appear more unnatural and defiant of all fact than this classification [of men into good and bad, friends and enemies of God]. The moment you attempt to apply it to actual persons, and to walk through the world parting, as you go, the sheep from the goats, you perceive how little it answers to any apparent reality, and how shocking the effect would be of running it sharply through life." Yet, as he points out, this is a doctrine "which has had the most powerful hold of minds

2 Receive us ; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

capacious, philosophical, harmonious, devout, and has rarely failed to throw its awful shadow across the holiest souls." The difficulty is resolved when we turn "from the outward to the inward look of moral evil." It would be impossible to imagine any kind of compromise between the two great antagonists in this awful struggle—"what harmony has Christ with Belial ?" And compromise ought to be just as inconceivable between their human representatives, "the believer and the unbeliever." The supreme duty is to "come out from among them": he who does not do this, remains with them, and is therefore in practice, whatever he may be in profession, on their side.

But to those who separate, the reward is exceeding great. They "go out" from Babylon, from heathenism, from evil associations, of whatever kind they be ; but they enter into a divine and gracious fellowship, into the heavenly family, into the house of God. The contaminating associations are replaced by pure and uplifting relationships, in which it becomes increasingly easy to advance on the path of holiness. The fear of God is the atmosphere in which the whole life is bathed ; and the separation is rewarded with an eternal weight of glory.

*Paul's Affectionate Appeal and Confession (vii. 2-4).*

2. However the previous section (vi. 14-vii. 1) is to be explained, it is obvious that this paragraph continues the thought and even the imagery of vi. 11-13. There he had pled that whatever constraint may have existed between the Corinthians and him, it had been altogether on their side, not on his. There was room, ample room, in his heart for them ; and he pled with them to accord him a similar place in their hearts. In the same strain he now continues ; **make room for us** in your heart. He deserves this, for he has not wronged any one of them (*οὐδέποτε*) in any way—a very modest claim for the apostle to make, who had spent his strength and risked his life for the gospel's sake. **We wronged nobody, we corrupted (or destroyed) nobody, we took advantage of nobody.** These accusations had been made against Paul (cf. xii. 17-19), and the energy with which he repudiates the charge is power-

3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

fully suggested by these abrupt sentences, with the threefold repetition of *οὐδέποντα* (*no one*): not a man has he wronged or imposed upon. It is difficult to determine precisely what concrete meaning is to be attached to the words *wrong* and *destroy* (or *corrupt*)—it is very improbable that there is any allusion to corruption through false doctrine. It is more likely that these more general words are to be explained by the more specific *πλεονεκτεῖν* (to take advantage of), which may well have reference to Paul's earnestness in securing money collections for the Judæan churches (cf. viii., ix.) ; the disaffected may have characterized this as extortion (cf. xii. 16, 17). “In many ways unknown to us,” says Meyer, “the apostle and his fellow-workers might be charged with thus ruining others. How easily might the severity of his moral demands, his strictness in punishing, his zeal in collecting money, his habit of lodging with members of the churches, be vilified by malicious and misguided persons !”

3. Pleading as he is for a place in the heart of the Corinthians, Paul is scrupulously careful to avoid anything that may seem like harshness or censure: so he adds, **It is not to condemn you** (lit. *not with a view to condemnation*) that I speak—the warmth of his previous words (vi. 11–13) ought already to have convinced them on that score—for I have said before—in vi. 11, 12—that **you are in our hearts** (cf. Phil. i. 7) **to die and live together**. The general sense is plain—Paul is indicating the profound intimacy which subsists between himself and them—but the precise reference is not so plain. Does Paul mean that he is ready to live and die with them, or they with him? In strict grammar, the latter explanation would seem the more plausible, as *you* is the subject of the sentence. Paul really means, however, that he has them in his heart, and the concluding phrase may easily mean, that he would be willing to live or die with them. On the whole this is perhaps the more appropriate. The ambiguity of the Greek phrase might be thus reproduced in English: “*You are in our hearts, so that we are one (σύν) in life and death.*” Or rather *death and life*, for it is significant that death comes first. This

4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you : I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our

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may be because Paul regards his life as a continual process of dying (cf. iv. 11, vi. 9)—his dying is a more prominent fact than his living. It has also been suggested, with less probability, that the dying precedes the living, because the reference is to dying with Christ in faith, in order to live with Him (cf. v. 15).

4. The affectionate nature of Paul shines through his eager words. He is in no mood to condemn the Corinthians (ver. 3). He is proud of them, he boasts of them : their conduct in the matter he is now about to discuss has not only comforted him, it has made him very happy. Notice the rhythm into which his sentences fall (*πολλή μοι . . . πολλή μοι . . . ; πεπλήρωμαι . . . ὑπερπερισσεύομαι*). Great is my confidence in (lit. in relation to, *πρός*) you (in such a context *παρρησία* can hardly mean "liberty of speech"); and his confidence is not ashamed to express itself—great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled (was then, and am still: pref.) with comfort, and not only with comfort, but with abounding joy, I experience an overflowing joy, amid all this affliction of ours. The transition from the first pers. plur. (ver. 2) to the sing. in 3, 4 suggests that we have here a peculiarly intimate and personal confession of feeling. The occasion of this comfort and happiness becomes clear in the next paragraph.

*Titus and His Comforting News (vii. 5-12).*

Paul now writes with great interest and particularity of the "distress" to which he has just alluded, and of the manner in which he has been comforted. He was anxious about his converts, especially anxious about the impression made upon them by his letter dealing with the case of the incestuous man. It had certainly vexed them, but had it done more? had it borne fruit? On all these points his mind had been put at rest by the coming of Titus, who brought news very much more reassuring than Paul had dared to expect.

5. In ii. 12, 13, we were informed of the restless anxiety by which Paul was consumed at Troas, where he had been dis-

flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side ; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus ;

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appointed at not finding Titus. With this restlessness in his heart, he had started for Macedonia, and there it was only relieved by the coming of Titus—or, as Paul puts it, *God* comforted him by the coming of Titus. **For**, not only in Troas (ii. 12), but also **after we had come to Macedonia** and were again among Christian friends and churches, even then **our flesh** (*i.e.* “our poor human nature”) **had no rest** (the perfect, *εσχηκεν*, vividly expresses the continuity of the unrest, up to that moment: the aorist, *εσχεν*, is also read by some MSS.). In ii. 13, it is his *spirit* that is said to have had no rest, here his *flesh*: there is little practical difference between the two statements, except that the former is more inner than the latter. *Flesh* suggests human nature, on the side of its weakness and frailty. **But in every direction (we were) afflicted**: the distress was both *external* and *inward*—battles **without** against adversaries, of whom so earnest and daring a man would have no lack, and **fears within**—fears for the spiritual condition of his converts, for their attitude towards his letter, etc. These abrupt pairs of words, without verb or connecting particle, are very impressive.

6. **But** his distress was relieved by the coming of Titus, and the coming of Titus was itself the gift of God. It was no accident, but a *divine* providence, a divine *consolation*. The real comforter was not Titus, but God. The opening passage in the epistle (i. 3 ff.) had dwelt much upon the divine consolation experienced by the apostle in all his affliction, and the passage we are now considering furnishes us with a vivid concrete instance of it; for **He who comforts the downcast** (this, rather than *lowly*, humble, is the meaning of *ταπεινοῦς* here)—no less than **GOD** Himself—**comforted us by the coming of Titus**: strictly *in* (*ἐν*), the coming was the element *in* which the consolation was manifested: the word (*ταπονοσία*) is the same as that used for the coming (presence) of Christ. But how much the coming of Titus meant to Paul at this juncture, and how directly he regarded it as an expression

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation whereby he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that

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of the divine goodness to him, we have already seen in ii. 14 ff. where the very thought of it inspires him to a sudden burst of grateful praise.

7. But it was not merely the sight of Titus' face that comforted him, welcome though that would be, but the reassuring message which Titus brought of the Corinthian situation—of their penitent grief, of their zealous interest in Paul and their fidelity to his instructions. **And God comforted us not by his coming only, but also by the comfort which he himself received from you** (lit. “the comfort with which he was comforted in respect of you, in your case”). Titus passes on to Paul the comfort which he had himself experienced when he saw the changed spiritual condition of the Corinthian church. Titus' *news* comforted Paul, as he told us the story (*pres. ptc. ἀναγγέλλων*) of **YOUR longing** to see me, of **YOUR mourning** at the irregularities in the church and at your toleration of the offender (cf. 1 Cor. v.) and of **YOUR zeal on my behalf**, your earnest desire to obey me and maintain my authority: **so that**, by the story Titus had to tell me, **I was made (even) more glad** than by his mere visit, glad as that made me. *You* (*ὑμῶν*) thrice repeated, is in latent contrast to the desire, sorrow and zeal which Paul had shown on *their* behalf. A response is now forthcoming from *them*.

8. Paul now reverts definitely and explicitly to the subject of the letter (apparently 1 Corinthians; and, for the specific incident, cf. 1 Cor. v.), which he had reason to fear might have merely vexed the Corinthian church, without producing the spiritual results which he intended it to produce. **For, though I grieved you in the letter** which I wrote—the first epistle certainly contains some severe writing, which may well have

the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

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humiliated and grieved the proud Corinthians—I do not regret it. A.V. takes the next clause *εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην* with this one—“I do not repent, though I did repent.” It seems much better with Amer. R.V. to take it with the following clause, where it makes a telling contrast to *νῦν χαίρω*, “now I am glad.” **Though I WAS inclined to regret it** (this appears to be the delicate shade of meaning implied by the imperfect tense)—**for**, he adds parenthetically, **I see**, from the news Titus has brought me, **that that letter grieved you, though but for a season—NOW** that I know the whole truth, **I am glad** (*χαίρω*, cf. *χαρῆναι*, ver. 7). The reading in ver. 8 is uncertain, but the general sense is not affected. Some MSS. (followed by Westcott and Hort) omit *γάρ* after *βλέπω*—simply “I see that . . .” Westcott and Hort go further and suggest that *βλέπω* is “probably a primitive error” for *βλέπων* (partic.)—“though I repented, seeing that that letter grieved you.” But the impression created by the parenthesis of the ordinary text is much more lively.

9. Of course Paul is not glad that they were grieved: to one who in life and death was one with his converts (ver. 3), the grief of his converts would be a grief to him. It is the fact that their grief bears spiritual fruit, and issues in (*εἰς*) a change of mental (*μετάνοιαν*) and spiritual attitude, that rejoices his heart. I am glad not because you were grieved, but because your grief issued in repentance. Their grief was not barren, but fruitful, because it took God into account, it was in accordance with the divine will, it considered the situation *in relation to God* (*κατὰ Θεόν*): for you were grieved in a godly manner, that in no respect might you suffer loss, in particular, in regard to your salvation (ver. 10) from us. Again we find the same modest understatement as in ver. 2. The divine object (*ἵνα*) of their godly sorrow Paul represents as that they might suffer no loss from him, such

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

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as they would have suffered had their sorrow been of a worldly nature : in point of fact, not only no loss, but the profoundest gain—as he proceeds to show in verses 10, 11—had come to them through Paul and his stern and candid letter.

10. He now contrasts the sorrow which they felt, blessedly issuing as it did in *repentance* and *salvation*, with that other sorrow, which he had feared was all they felt—that spiritually barren sorrow, which issues in despair and death. **For godly grief**—the sorrow which relates itself to God—**works, effects, repentance which issues in** (*εἰς*) **salvation that is not to be regretted.** It is very difficult to say whether the last adjective (*ἀμεταμέλητον*) should be taken with the word *repentance* or *salvation*: so far as the order of the words is concerned, either would be possible and normal to Greek usage. A.V. suggests a play upon the words which is very familiar in Greek—"repentance to salvation not to be *repented of*"—apparently a repentance which would never need to be repented of. But this play is not suggested by the Greek, which uses two different words—*μετάνοιαν*, *ἀμεταμέλητον*. On the other hand, "not to be repented of" might seem a somewhat tame epithet to apply to salvation ; but such understatement are common and frequently expressive—cf. "a citizen of no mean city,"—hence a salvation which no one will ever regret having attained, however hard to reach, and however dearly bought (see citation in Alford). On the whole, however, it seems more appropriate to connect the adjective with the word "repentance." **But the grief of the world works out, results in, death.** The *grief of the world* is such as is felt by those who belong to the world, and not to the kingdom of God—grief in which the thought of God is not present, grief which is not *κατὰ Θεόν*, which has no relation to God, grief which thinks only of its own humiliation, and which is not accepted as discipline (xii. 21) and as a means of spiritual progress. Such grief, having no outlook upon God and hope, can only consume, wither, *deaden* the soul, bring it to despair and *death* : salvation is impossible.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I *did it*

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11. In corroboration of what he has just said about the effect of godly grief, he appeals to their own recent experience. It was *this very thing* (*αὐτὸ τοῦτο*) and not something else, that produced the marvellous change in the Corinthians which he proceeds to describe in detail. **For see!**—they cannot deny the evidence of their own eyes—**this very thing, your godly grief**, I mean—**what earnestness it wrought for you**, so unlike your previous indifference; nay, not only earnestness, *but* (*ἀλλὰ*) also **what self-vindication**, as you maintained your innocence before Titus, in the matter of the transgressor (I Cor. v.): nay, not only self-vindication, *but indignation* at the transgressor; nay, not only indignation, *but alarm*, lest, if the situation should not improve, “I should come with a rod” (I Cor. iv. 21); nay, not only alarm, *but longing* for me to come; nay, not only longing for me, *but zeal* against the offender; nay, a zeal which was not a mere unproductive emotion, *but* which expressed itself in the infliction of just **punishment**. With characteristic generosity Paul here says nothing of their former indifference (I Cor. v. 2, 6) to their brother’s disgrace, which had pained him so much, and evoked from him some very stern words: there had at least been no *positive* participation on their part, and Paul, in the exuberance of his joy at their fruitful repentance, is content to say that they have “approved themselves *in everything*.” **In everything you commended yourselves**, and showed yourselves to be pure in the matter—the disgraceful matter to which Paul does not wish to allude more specifically (*τῷ πράγματι*).

12. Paul admirably concludes (*ἄπα*) this description of the effect of his letter upon the Corinthians with the assertion that the *real* object of that letter was that they might learn how much they cared for him. They did not properly know this

not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort :

till their practical response to his letter had *revealed* (*φανερωθῆναι*) it to them. Certainly one of the objects of that letter had been to have the “wrong-doer” solemnly condemned (I Cor. v. 3-5), but this was for the church’s sake (I Cor. v. 7) as well as for his own : the great object of the letter, however, designed by Providence if not by Paul, could only be read in the sequel, which revealed in them an earnest loyalty to him deeper than they had dreamed of. So then, though I did write to you (it was) not for the sake of the incestuous man that did the wrong, nor yet for the sake of him, the father, that suffered the wrong, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made plain among you (*πρός*, not “to you”) in the sight of God, in whose presence, when men are conscious of it, only sincere conduct is possible (iv. 2). Some MSS. (followed by A.V.) read *τὴν σπουδὴν ἡμῶν τὴν ἵπτερ ἡμῶν*, “our care for you.” This is commonplace ; the other is much more subtle and delicate, and quite in the skilful conciliatory vein that runs through the whole paragraph. That is why we have been comforted, because the object of the letter, as just defined, has been attained.

*The Joy of Titus at the News He Brought* (vii. 13-16).

The news of the changed situation in Corinth, which had so comforted and gladdened Paul (vv. 6, 7) had been brought to him by Titus : in a few additional words he lets the Corinthians feel how much that news had meant to Titus, as well as to himself. Titus, too, had been refreshed and cheered by what he had seen in Corinth, and his heart went out to the people, as he thought of the welcome they had extended to him. It was the more important for Paul to reassure the Corinthians of the great place they had in the heart of Titus, as he was returning to Corinth in connection with the collection to be discussed in the next two chapters (viii. 6, 16, 23).

13. Paul has just spoken of the *comfort* he had experienced at the successful issue of his letter. But there was more than com-

yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed ; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I *made* before Titus, is found a truth.

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fort, there was delight. Paul rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and the manifest happiness of Titus, as he came back with his good news, had provoked Paul also to happiness, indeed to a transport which he can only describe by the somewhat unusual device of two comparative adverbs (*περισσοτέρως μᾶλλον*). And in addition to (or possibly simply *in*) our comfort, we were made the more exceedingly glad by the gladness of Titus—his gladness being because refreshment (*ἀναπέπαυται* comes first, and is emphatic) has come to his spirit from all of you (*ἀπό*, *from* : they are the source of the refreshing). Titus may well have started for Corinth with misgivings, but he found there a reception as unanimous (*πάντων*) as it was surprising. It is his *spirit* that was refreshed, just as it was Paul's *spirit* (ii. 13 ; *flesh*, vii. 5) that was troubled.

14. Despite the strained relations between Paul and the Corinthians—on their part at least, though not on his (vi. 11–13)—he yet believed in them, and was not afraid even to boast of them to Titus—(cf. ix. 2, where he boasts of their liberality). Paul's confidence may have helped to allay Titus's misgivings, when he started ; and Paul relates here with evident pleasure that his confidence in the Corinthians had been more than justified by their treatment of his emissary. He had spoken the truth, as indeed he always speaks the truth. **For if I have made any boast to him about you, I was not ashamed**—you showed the qualities which I had told Titus you would show. **On the contrary**, so far from having any occasion to be ashamed, this boasting of mine about you (some MSS. read *ὑμῶν*—this boasting *about you*) before Titus proved true, just as all my words to you were true. The apostle cannot help glancing here at the charge of ambiguity and insincerity, which seems to

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

have vexed him deeply (i. 16-18, ii. 17, iv. 2). He had spoken the truth *about* them—Titus can certify to that: he gently reminds them that all his words *to* them (the reference is not to his teaching) were just as true as his commendation of them.

**15, 16.** And Titus is as happy as I am. His heart (*σπλάγχνα*, cf. vi. 12) goes out to (lit. *is towards*) you the more abundantly, as he recalls the obedience of you all (to the message sent by Paul)—how with fear and trembling you welcomed him. These words might be taken literally, as the message was a stern one, involving a solemn condemnation of the evil-doer (I Cor. v. 3-5); but they may imply no more than that high and scrupulous seriousness with which the relations between a people and its minister (or, as here, his representative) should be sustained. Here, as before (ver. 13) the respect and welcome offered by the Corinthians to Titus are unanimous (*πάντων*), and, for the moment, Paul's cup of happiness is full: I am glad that in every respect I am of good confidence through you—not “I am confident in you,” but “I am confident, courageous, and this feeling of mine reposes *in* (*ἐν*) you—you are the source of my confidence.” Courage was one of Paul's watchwords (v. 6, 8), and he pays his Corinthian converts a great compliment in regarding them as the inspiration of his confidence. Stanley gives the sense well—“I am bold through your encouragement.”

This whole chapter (together with vi. 11-13) is an interesting revelation of Paul's large humanity, and of his great capacity for, and need of, friendship. The joy that shines upon the face of Titus is reflected upon the face of Paul. He is comforted by the sight of him (ver. 6); he is made happy by the story he brings of the fine Christian feeling displayed by his distant Corinthian friends. He cannot bear to think that there is any misunderstanding or estrangement; it is a deep necessity of his

nature that they make room for him in their hearts (ver. 2) ; they are in his heart for life and death (ver. 3).

And though their errors had been neither few nor trivial, he frankly recognizes their admirable qualities, even when the tension was keen ; and he speaks of them to his friend Titus with pride, knowing that his confidence in them will not be put to shame. He is vexed when they are vexed ; but he is too true a friend to say Peace, when there is no peace. It is his duty to write a letter which will grieve them, but he writes it, in the faith that it will bring them to a better mind ; and he can hardly find words to express the consolation and the happiness with which his soul was flooded at the news of their Christian reception of Titus and their obedience to his message. The words *comfort* and *joy* chase each other throughout the paragraph. One can feel the passion of the friend and the orator beating behind the swift and breathless references to their longing, their tears, their zeal, their earnestness, their self-vindication, their indignation, their terror. They are the impassioned words of one who loved the men to whom he preached, of one who felt that he was indebted to them for no small measure of his happiness and courage.

## COLLECTION FOR THE POOR AT JERUSALEM (viii.-ix.)

### CHAPTER VIII

I MOREOVER, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ;

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Paul now addresses himself to the question of the collection for the poor at Jerusalem, and his treatment of this question is so full as to justify us in regarding these chapters as constituting one of the great divisions of the epistle. Paul had good reason for regarding this collection as a matter of peculiar importance. He recognized that the attitude of the Corinthians to it would be no unfair test of their religion : it would show how well they had learned the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for their sakes, had become poor (viii. 9). But, apart from this, Paul had been commissioned by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, when they gave him the right hand of fellowship and acknowledged him as missionary to the Gentiles, to "remember the poor," and this naturally he was "zealous to do" (Gal. ii. 10). The importance of the subject to Paul justifies his relatively elaborate treatment of it, and the Christian wisdom and tact with which he handled men and affairs are nowhere more conspicuous than in this discussion.

#### *The Example of the Macedonian Churches (viii. 1-7).*

I. The passage opens skilfully. Paul is about to appeal to the liberality of the Corinthians, to urge upon them to show themselves as strong in this virtue as they were in others (ver. 7) ; he has already prepared the way by expressing, at the end of the last chapter, his joy and confidence in them. *Noblesse oblige* ; they cannot afford to disappoint the confidence which their own noble conduct has raised in the bosom of the

2 How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

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apostle (vii. 16). Of course he has arguments to advance—the example of the impoverished Macedonians, most of all the example of Jesus ; but before he starts the discussion at all, he lets them feel that he is conscious of dealing with men, who have already gladdened his heart and raised his hopes high. Thus illiberal objections are almost disarmed by anticipation, especially as he addresses them affectionately as *brethren*. Now ( $\delta\epsilon$  starts a new subject), **brethren**, we should like to inform you of the grace of God. He is about to speak of money, but he never once mentions it : it would even seem as if he deliberately avoided the word. He lets the light of religion play about it, and in that light it is transfigured. If men give, it is of *the grace of God*, who has endowed them at once with the power and the desire to give. So the liberality of the Macedonians Paul characteristically describes not so much as *their gift* to the Jerusalem poor, but as *God's gift to them* ; given in (or among : practically almost equal to *to*) the churches of Macedonia, such as Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, which Paul had visited (Acts xvi., xvii.). In ascribing the Macedonian liberality to the grace of God, Paul makes it plain that he has no desire to praise the Macedonians at the expense of the Corinthians ; it is God who worketh in them (Phil. ii. 13).

2. The divine grace bestowed upon the Macedonians was manifest in this that, sorely put to the test as they were by affliction, so far were they from repining or succumbing that they rejoiced—they triumphantly stood the test of affliction ; and the abundance of their joy and their deep (lit. reaching down to the depth) poverty abounded and overflowed into a stream of liberality,—here effectively described, in contrast with their *poverty*, as the **RICHES** of their liberality. Besides the general poverty from which Macedonia was suffering at that period, partly as the result of the Roman civil wars, the Christians would be subjected to special persecution (1 Thes. ii. 14 f., cf. Acts xvi. 20) ; but in ( $\epsilon\nu$ ) it their joy abounded ; and, poor as they were, they expressed it in a *wealthy* liberality. The thing was so remarkable that the language takes the form of

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves ;

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of ministering to the saints.

paradox ; notice, too, the repetition of the strong word *abound*. Their ἀπλότης (simplicity ; then, simple *liberality*) was the combined result (*εἰς*) of their joy and their poverty ; like the widow's mite (Luke xxi. 3 f.). Her poverty too was deep (*καὶ βάθος*), but her liberality was abundant—she “cast in more than they all.”

3, 4. How eager and energetic the Macedonian liberality was we see from the following breathless sentences (verses 3–5). For according to their power, I bear witness, yes, and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord—not only without solicitation from us, but actually soliciting us with much entreaty for the privilege of sharing in the ministration to the saints (lit. for the *grace* [or favour] and fellowship [or participation] in ministering, etc.). To the Macedonian alacrity the hesitation of the rich young man forms a pathetic contrast (Mat. xix. 16 f.). The same word χάρις is here used as in ver. 1 ; their gift to others is, in another aspect, God's gift to them. The construction is somewhat obscure : probably the words “grace” and “fellowship” are governed by the idea of ἔδωκαν (gave) which follows in ver. 5 : though grammatically, their government by δέομενοι (beseeching) is not absolutely excluded : in either case, the essential meaning is as above. There was more than spontaneity (*αὐθαίρετοι*) on the part of the Macedonians, there was enthusiasm ; they counted giving as a privilege—especially giving to the *saints*, distant though they were, for they were brethren in Christ—and they were so eager to secure this privilege that they actually begged for it earnestly, Paul perhaps being at first unwilling to take much from men so poor. They gave of their own accord, that is, without *human* solicitation, but the *divine* will was acting on their wills (ver. 5). (The words δέξασθαι ἡμᾶς, “that we would receive (the gift),” A.V. are not found in the great MSS. : they are simply a gloss, and are rightly omitted in R.V.)

5 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith,

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5, 6. And their giving was not as we had expected—from poor and persecuted people not much was to be expected—but they gave **THEMSELVES** to the Lord first and to us. His ministers; and the impulse to this exuberant and self-denying liberality came, as it only could come, through the will of God. His was the will that touched their wills and inspired them to give so lavishly out of their poverty. The idea is not that they gave, first themselves, and then their money, but that they had poured themselves into their gift. They had made the great renunciation of self: consequently, with their resources they served not themselves, but the Lord. Stanley and Bernard, however, take the reference to be “the devotion of personal service in the work of ‘spreading the gospel, such as was given by Sopater of Beroea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica (Acts xx. 4) and Epaphroditus of Philippi (Phil. ii. 25)” ;—they gave “not merely their money, but ‘themselves’ to his service as constant companions.” And the result or effect (*εἰς τὸ . . .*) of their unselfish generosity was that we urged upon Titus that, as he had made a beginning before with the collection, during his former stay at Corinth, so he should also go on to complete among you (*εἰς ὑμᾶς*, lit. “in regard of you” : his activity was to be directed towards them) this grace of liberality also (*χάρις*, cf. note on vers. 1 and 3). The grace of liberality is not here contrasted, as in ver. 7, with other graces, e.g. zeal and repentance (vii. 11, 13 f.) ; the *καὶ* refers not to *this* grace, as opposed to others, but to the whole clause : besides the other work which Titus had to do, he was *also* to attend to *this*.

7. But enough of this: Paul breaks off the appeal to the Macedonian example, and throws them, as it were upon their honour. Men whose other graces were so conspicuous, will surely not fail in the grace of liberality. **As ye abound in**

and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, in your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

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**EVERYTHING**—faith, utterance, knowledge, earnestness of every kind, *your love to me* (lit. rising *from* you, and reposing *in* me, as its object)—(*see*) that ye abound in this grace also. In the last clause there is an ellipse of some such verb as “*see*,” “*I intreat you*”; probably the influence of *παρακαλέσαι* (*exhort*) in ver. 6 is unconsciously felt. Instead of *τῇ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀγάπῃ*, Westcott and Hort read *τ. ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀγ.* (*my love to you*); but to regard Paul’s love for the Corinthians as a grace of *theirs*, is distinctly artificial. The context demands the mention of a gift which they themselves exercise, comparable to faith, utterance, etc. : hence “*your love to me*.” These words of Paul are not an idle compliment. In point of fact, the Corinthians did possess these graces : the first epistle opens with a grateful acknowledgment to God that this is so (1 Cor. i. 4, 5 : cf. xii.). And Paul, with his keen knowledge of human nature, commends them for this in order to stimulate them to something harder still. But one can hardly fail to detect, beneath the praise, a gentle note of irony. They abounded in *everything*, in spiritual gifts of no mean order ; but what of their attitude to material things ? were they ready to make a Christian use of *money* ? They had many graces ; had they grace enough to part with their money in the interest of their needy brethren in a distant land ? Paul’s is an eminently practical gospel, which does not lose itself in speculation, but which bravely faces the tests and demands of ordinary life.

*Another Plea for Liberality* (viii. 8-15).

8. The Macedonian example was wonderful. Deep as was their poverty, they yet begged for the privilege of giving, and their generosity surpassed all reasonable hopes. But there was another example higher still, that of “our Lord Jesus Christ” ; and incidentally Paul illuminates the whole question of Christian

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

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giving, by letting the light of that radiant Example fall upon it. This is the plea he prefers ; for he fears even the appearance of being dictatorial in a matter of this kind. **It is not by way of command that I speak**; if he has mentioned the example of the Macedonians, it is simply because this will enable him to test the sincerity of their love to their distant brethren in Christ. **But by holding forth before you the earnestness of OTHERS**, I am (supply *λέγω*) testing the sincerity of YOUR love also. The example of the Macedonian earnestness is the means by which (*διὰ* with genitive) the sincerity of the Corinthians is tested. *ἕτερων* (others) and *ὑμετέρας* (your) are emphatic.

9. Paul has no desire to *command* the Corinthians to go and do likewise. Nor has he any need ; for they have the perennial inspiration of the supreme Example. **Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus (Christ)**—the grace manifested by Him, and which showed itself in this that for YOUR sakes He became poor, though He was rich, in order that YOU, through HIS poverty, might become rich. It is very significant of the grandeur of the thoughts by which Paul was habitually haunted, that he introduces this great utterance quite incidentally as a reason for his not urging the Corinthians to liberality in a tone of command. The great example of Jesus ought to be a sufficient stimulus to those who believe in Him. In the words *being rich* Paul is clearly thinking of the pre-existent Christ, and the riches are the glory which He had with the Father “before the world was” (John xvii. 5). The classic elaboration of the thought here simply presented is the great passage in Phil. ii. 6–8. The word *ἐπιτρόχευσε*, while grammatically it might refer to the poverty of Christ’s earthly life, much more naturally refers to His *entrance* upon that life to His “taking the form of a servant.” The incarnation is the supreme manifestation of “grace,” and the incomparable incentive to liberality. How far removed this doctrine is from being an abstraction to Paul is shown by the altogether natural and even incidental way in which it is introduced as the great motive to liberality ; and almost more by the very personal turn the statement of that

10 And herein I give *my* advice : for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing *of it* ; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

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doctrine takes : "Christ, being rich, became poor, not merely for the whole world, but for *you* Corinthians." The impact of the doctrine is definite and particular, it is a Corinthian affair ; Christ, being rich, became poor, "that *you*, through *His* poverty, might become rich" with the heavenly riches, e.g., reconciliation to God which comes through Christ (v. 18) liberty (iii. 18) life (iv. 11). *You* (*ὑμεῖς*) and *His* (*ἐκείνοις*) are very emphatic. Christ and the incarnation furnish the most overwhelming exhibition of "grace," to a Christian the greatest conceivable inspiration to liberality ; but this last clause suggests, though it does not directly state, that Christ is more than an example ; the wealth that He brings us, is only ours *in Him*. He is the source of the liberal life as well as its pattern.

10, 11. However, it is only an opinion, not a command (ver. 8) that I give in this matter. His sentence points back to ver. 8, showing conclusively that the great utterance in ver. 9 is quite parenthetical. For this is for your good, seeing that not only in the matter of doing but also of willing you made a beginning last year before the Macedonians (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1). "This is expedient for you" : what ? Perhaps that Paul offers them an opinion, rather than a command —for people who had shown themselves so eager in willing and doing, the tone of command would be unseemly ; but more probably *this* refers to the grace of liberality in which they are to abound (ver. 7). Let them continue as they had begun. Much doubt hangs over the interpretation of the phrase "not only to do, but also to will." As the will must precede the deed, the reverse order would seem the more natural, and is indeed read by the Syriac version (not only to will, but to do). With the present order, θέλειν has been interpreted as "to be willing to do," and the sentence would run "not only to do, but to do it willingly." The word, however, cannot bear that meaning.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

13 For I *mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened :

Heinrici explains it as a climax pointing backwards ; “you were before the Macedonians not only in carrying out the collection, but also in desiring it” (note the difference between the present θέλειν, and the aorist ποιῆσαι). That the subject of the collection was already in their minds is shown by their question which Paul answers in 1 Cor. xvi. 1 ff. Bousset suggests (without, however, any textual warrant), that the original meaning was : “not indeed with the doing, but at any rate with the willing.” It is difficult to see how so simple and natural a reading could ever have been transformed into our present text ; but there can be no doubt that, besides making good sense in itself, it joins admirably to the following sentence. **But now**, seeing that you were first in *willing*, go on to complete the doing also—crown (*ἐπι*) the will with the deed—that, as the readiness to will (was there), there may also be the completion according to (your) means (not, as A.V. “out of that which ye have”). Enthusiasm is worth little, especially to starving men, unless it *accomplishes* something.

12. But Paul is ever reasonable and practical. The gift is to be *in proportion to the means* of the giver. If men give “*beyond their power*” (ver. 3) the heart of the apostle is exceeding glad, but he does not expect that (*οὐκ . . . ἡλπίσαμεν*, ver. 5) ; he is content if they give “*according to their power*” (ver. 3). Men are not expected to give what they do not have. The spiritual value of the gift depends not on its amount, but on its inner quality : the great question is whether it be the gift of those who have “*first given themselves*” (ver. 5). It may be much or little, but it ought to be given with readiness, and it ought to be in proportion to the means : for if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man may, in any given circumstances, have (*ἔὰν ἔχῃ*, subj.) not according to what, as a matter of fact (*ἔχει*, indic.) he does not have.

13-15. The idea of the collection, Paul now points out, is not to ease the one party at the expense of the other, but to restore

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their

that relative equality (*ὅπως γένηται ισότης*) which is the ideal condition of things, and which is suggested by the story of the manna. For it (my object : or, the purpose of the collection) is not that others may have relief (and) you trouble. But, on the principle of equality, YOUR abundance at the present juncture is for the supply of THEIR deficiency, that THEIR abundance may perhaps on some other occasion be for the supply of YOUR deficiency, in order that there may result equality. The meaning of the sentence is plain, but its punctuation and division are not so certain. The first clause may be taken, as above, independently, assuming an ellipse, and a colon put at "equality," as in R.V. ; but it is also possible to regard the two verses as one continuous sentence, thus: "For not in order that there may be relief to others, and distress to you, but on the principle of equality, your abundance in the present juncture is to supply their defect, etc." The last clause probably does not mean "that their *spiritual* wealth may supply your deficiency," but simply that, if ever the tables should be turned, they rich, and you poor, then their superfluity would relieve your distress, as yours may now relieve theirs. The prominent word in the verses is *equality*: the liberality which Paul urges is to produce that equality and balance of resources which is only just and fair, especially among brethren; and this point he illustrates—it is hardly intended as a proof—by a reference to the manna story in Exodus xvi. 18 according to which this equality was providentially secured. In the words of scripture, "He that (gathered) much had nothing over, and he that (gathered) little had no lack." With ὁ, we have to supply *συλλέξας* (gathered) from the *συνέλεξαν* of Exodus xvi. 17.

The question considered in these paragraphs—the place of giving—is one of the most delicate that confronts the members or the minister of a Christian church, and Paul shows his customary tact in refusing to be dictatorial. He will only hazard an opinion ; but his opinion is presented so persuasively and supported by examples of such overwhelming cogency that it has the practical effect of a command for the unsophisticated conscience.

abundance also may be a *supply* for your want; that there may be equality:

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He wishes to inspire his Corinthian "brethren" with a Christian view of money, and in this connection his frequent use of the word *grace* (*χάρις*) is extremely significant. The liberality which the Macedonians showed (ver. 4) and which he entreats and expects the Corinthians to show (ver. 7) is described by the very same word as describes the spirit which prompted Christ to exchange His state of heavenly glory for the humility and poverty of an earthly career (ver. 9). If any man gives to the needy, it is only because God has first given to him the resources and the will to use them. So liberality itself is a gift of God, a grace, a manifestation of the "grace of God" (ver. 1). And not by any means the least important; many who shine in other walks of virtue, are ignominious failures here. It is possible to be a man of eloquence and even faith, and yet to be mean (ver. 7). But the practical Paul is not content with the graces of faith and utterance and knowledge and earnestness; his converts must abound in this other grace of liberality also. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was supremely manifested when He divested Himself of His heavenly *περισσευμα* (superfluity; ver. 14), abandoning it to enrich a needy world—or, as Paul more trenchantly and personally puts it, "to enrich *you*"—and the followers of the Lord are most like Him when they too give of their abundance to supply the needs of others. And it is not enough that they intend or will to do it, they must *do* it (ver. 11); their zeal must be concentrated in action, it must get itself translated into *accomplished* fact.

Liberality, however, must be rational. It must be enthusiastic—"if the zeal be there, it is acceptable"—but yet it must soberly take all the facts into account. It must not give what it does not have: it must not wilfully throw away its resources. The gift is to be given with readiness, but also with a sense of proportion. It has to bear some relation to a man's means. Much or little, it will be acceptable, if it be "according to what it has." It is not the amount that matters, but its spiritual quality, the amount of "readiness" it represents. If this is as it should be, then a just and even generous proportion will be guaranteed. Niggardliness will be impossible to the redeemed,

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over ; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

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to those who “know the grace of Christ” (ver. 9). This is only another way of saying that the gift will be at least proportionate, and more probably generous, if the giver has first of all given himself. Men who have “first given themselves to the Lord” will not be mean in their gifts to His needy brethren. As brethren they should share alike ; approximate *equality* should prevail (ver. 14) ; and if one has abundance and another lack, the Christian instinct is to right the balance at once : for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Great is the force of example, and the example of the poor and persecuted Macedonians was a source of peculiar joy to Paul. Their liberality surprised him ; he expected them no doubt, as Christian men, to give according to their means (ver. 11), but they did more ; they gave even beyond their power, willingly, enthusiastically, without solicitation, even vehemently importuning Paul, who may well have hesitated to accept gifts so lavish from men so poor. These were the gifts of men who had given themselves, and Paul holds up their example as a spur to the Corinthians, though he will use no word of command. Why should he to men who are already acquainted with the grace of Christ ?

For here after all is the supreme Example. No human liberality, however affectionate and generous, could be compared to the grace of Him who “for your sakes” deliberately descended from the heavenly heights to the valley of humiliation involved in an earthly career. To bring the incarnation into connection with so mundane a matter as a collection of money for some poor strangers is very daring, but altogether in the manner of Paul. He reinforces the humblest duties by the most powerful inspirations : we see the way best when the light is brightest. A heart controlled by the thought of the incarnation and all that it involved, could not be other than generous to the needy, especially to the needy “saints” (ver. 4). But the Christ whose grace is so resplendent and persuasive in the incarnation, wins His true place and wields His true power among those who love Him, not so much because

He is their example, but rather because He is their Lord. They long for a share in ministering to others, according to their means, because they have first given themselves to *the Lord* (ver. 5).

On this passage, Stanley has some suggestive remarks. "This text," he says, alluding to viii. 9, "from bringing forward prominently the fact of our Lord's poverty as an example, gave rise to the mendicant orders, as founded by St. Francis of Assisi, who in this respect believed himself to be following the model of our Saviour's life. Such a result is doubly curious. It shows how a parenthesis, incidentally introduced, in an appeal, for a temporary purpose, to the generosity of the Corinthian church, has given birth to an immense institution, at one time spread over the whole of Europe. It shows how much of the extravagance of that institution might have been checked by acting less on the letter, and more on the spirit, of the passage in which the text occurs : a passage of which the general tendency is the very opposite to that which could reduce the feelings of generosity to a definite and uniform system."

*Arrangements for the Supervision of the Collection*  
(viii. 16-24).

The management of a collection, as of every other work involving organization, demands not only spiritual enthusiasm, but business capacity. Practical details have to be attended to, suitable officers have to be appointed, every suggestion of suspicious methods and motives has to be sedulously avoided, so that while the work advances the glory of the Lord (ver. 19) and must be able to bear the scrutiny of His eye (ver. 21), it must be no less honest and honourable in the sight of men. In arranging for the collection destined for the poor Christians, Paul shows his customary sagacity. There are always mean men ready to assume the worst of any one who has money to administer ; so, to avoid even the appearance of suspicion, Paul associates with his colleague Titus other two Christian brethren, one whose fame had already run through all the churches, and another whose earnestness Paul had repeatedly proved ; and the Corinthians are charged to show their liberality in the face of the churches as represented by these their delegates.

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches;

**16, 17. Now thanks be to God**—(the word *χάρις* has been in Paul's mind all through the chapter; here it is used in a new sense)—**who continually** (*εἰδόντι πρ. ptc.*) **puts into the heart of Titus the same earnestness on your behalf** as I myself have. *Earnestness* (*σπουδή*) is one of the Christian graces: the Corinthians have it (ver. 7), and Titus has it. Paul sees in Titus' zeal a gift of God, which he himself is impelled to acknowledge with gratitude. The thought is characteristically Christian that Titus' earnestness in furthering the collection for the Jerusalem poor was really earnestness in behalf of the *Corinthians* (*ὑπέρ*): *their* spiritual welfare would be advanced by their liberality. There are two proofs (*μέν . . . δέ*) of the earnestness of Titus; *firstly, because he accepted the exhortation* to which Paul alludes in ver. 6 (*παρακλησιν, παρακαλέσαι*), thereby at once showing his humility, and receiving his authentication from Paul; *and secondly, in his great earnestness* (lit. *being by nature more earnest than to need an exhortation*), *he is actually going forth to you of his own accord* (for *αὐθαιρέτος*, cf. ver. 4). The past tenses in this passage are epistolary; by the time the Corinthians read the letter, the fact will be that Titus *went* forth, and Paul *sent* with him the brother, etc.

**18, 19. And we are sending along with him**—why he does not allow him to go alone we see in ver. 20—the unnamed brother whose praise in the matter of the gospel is through all the churches, a phrase which shows the unity of spirit that, even at this early date, already bound the Christian churches together. Many guesses have been hazarded as to the identity of this brother, but certainty is quite unattainable. As “brethren” means Christian brethren in ver. 23, “brother” is likely to mean the same here, so that he is

19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration* of your ready mind:

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probably not the brother of Titus. On the strength of the reference to "the gospel," he has been identified with Luke: but "gospel" could hardly have been used so early of the *written* gospel, besides Luke's gospel was not yet written. Who the brother was we do not know, though he was already famous "*in the matter of the gospel*" (probably in preaching it) throughout the churches—a fact which incidentally shows us how great and lamentable are the gaps in our knowledge of the early Church. He is referred to again in xii. 18. **And not only** is he praised throughout the churches, **but also** (he has been) definitely elected by the Macedonian (ver. 1) churches (to be) our fellow-traveller in connection with this gift (lit. *grace*, i.e. the collection) which is being administered by us, to the glory of the Lord and to show our readiness. Elsewhere (cf. ver. 11, and esp. ix. 2) Paul uses the last word *προθυμία* of the readiness of the *Corinthians*, and it is tempting here to read, with A.V. *ὑμῶν* (*your* ready mind); but the chief uncials read *ὑμῶν* (*our*); as R.V.). It is difficult to say with what word the phrase "to the glory of the Lord and to show our readiness" should be connected. Either the collection is administered "to the glory of the Lord, etc.": or the other brother was associated with Titus "to the glory of the Lord, etc." In the one case, the meaning will be that the Lord is glorified in the brotherly spirit that animates the churches; in the other, that the association of the two will allay suspicion of misappropriation of the funds, and thus contribute to the glory of the Lord. The former seems the more natural. The collection also gives Paul occasion to show his *zealous interest* in the poor Christians of Judaea, in accordance with the charge laid upon him (Gal. ii. 10). How the brother referred to was elected we do not know; the word (*χειροτονεῖν*) suggests primarily a show of hands. The choice of a man who was not only favourably known throughout the whole of the then Christian world, but who had been definitely elected by the churches, would be a

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many

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guarantee to the meanly sceptical that Paul was prepared to welcome their challenge or scrutiny of his arrangement, in the matter of the collection.

**20, 21.** It is a pity that such precautions should be necessary, but Paul knew human nature, and he did not think it beneath his dignity to take the precautions necessary to safeguard his honour, with which was involved the “glory of the Lord.” So he associated with Titus this unnamed brother, **avoiding this, that any one should blame us**—as a matter of fact, the sequel shows us that his precautions were not unnecessary (xii. 17 f.)—in the matter of **this liberal collection which is being administered by us**. Throughout the section, the word “money” is significantly avoided. The collection, which in ver. 19 is described as a gift or *grace*, is now a *ἀδρότης*. The adjective *ἀδρός* means solid, and the noun implies, in this context, a *substantial* contribution—an indirect compliment and stimulus in one. Paul thinks it incumbent upon himself to take precautionary measures, because the life which he lives before the Lord is equally lived before men, and he must not expose himself and the cause he represents to unnecessary misunderstandings. **For we are careful for good (appearances) not only in the Lord's sight but also in men's.** This is a reminiscence of the Septuagint of Prov. iii. 4 which does not quite represent the Hebrew (“Thou shalt find favour and *good understanding in the sight of God and men*”).

**22.** **And with them**—with Titus and the brother elected—we are sending (epistolary aorist, *συνεπέμψαμεν*) **our brother**—not Paul's brother, but some Christian brother—whom many times in many matters we have proved to be **earnest**—earnestness is an indispensable virtue (ver. 16)—but now far more earnest through the great confidence he has been led to place in you by the encouraging report

things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

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of you that Titus has brought back; A.V.'s "the confidence which *I have in you*" is hardly correct. This brother was well known to Paul, and recommended by him with as much confidence as the other more famous "brother" of ver. 19. Paul is ready to stand by every member of the delegation. If (questions are asked) about Titus, he is my colleague and fellow-worker in relation to you: if our brethren—the two whom he has just mentioned—(are in question), they are emissaries of churches, the glory of Christ. Titus was certificated by *Paul*, the other two by the *churches*: only one is expressly mentioned as having been elected, but the churches no doubt approved, whether formally or informally, Paul's choice of the second brother. The word *ἀπόστολος* is here used in its more general and literal sense, of *one sent forth*. Coming from such a man as Paul, with his keen insight into character and his magnificent conception of the Christian ideal, the last two words are an extraordinary eulogy of the two delegates; for they surely mean more than that these were "men whose work tends to Christ's glory" (Alford). In their face the glory of Christ Himself was in some measure visible, as in His face the glory of God (cf. iv. 6).

24. Practical exhortation by way of conclusion (*οὖν*). Now then in the face of the churches as represented by these their delegates, offer them a practical proof, by a generous contribution, of your love (whether to me, cf. ver. 7, or to the poor Christians in Judæa), and thus a verification of our boasting on your behalf, boasting to which Paul several times alludes (vii. 4, 14, ix. 2). The Corinthians must, by their liberal conduct, show that he had spoken the truth about

## CHAPTER IX

1 FOR as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

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them. The churches were watching what the Corinthians would do, and the Corinthians must rise to the occasion. Instead of the smoother ἐνδείξασθε (imper. *show*) some good MSS. read ἐνδεικνύμενοι (*showing*) in which case the sentence would be unfinished.

*Paul's Earnest Hope That the Collection Will be Ready When he Comes (ix. 1-5).*

The subject of the collection might seem to have been already presented with reasonable adequacy. Paul has directed the thoughts of the Corinthians to the stimulus of the Macedonian example, and to the unfailing inspiration that lies in the incarnation. He has pointed out that the gift ought to be in proportion to their means, and urged upon them the duty of completing what they have begun; and finally he has taken steps to secure the fund from any suspicion of misappropriation. Yet, in spite of all his arrangements and exhortations, he has still some misgiving; not indeed that the money will not be forthcoming—he can trust them for that, for he knows their “readiness” of mind—but that it will not be forthcoming in time. He has boasted of their liberality to the Macedonians; and if the collection is not ready when he arrives, he will be affronted. That, then, is one reason for sending the delegates in advance—to have it ready against his arrival.

1, 2. For with regard to the ministration (that is the collection by which they are to be served) to the Jerusalem poor, whom here, as in viii. 4, he calls the saints, it is superfluous for me to be writing (*γράφειν*, pres., not aor.) to you, for the reason he is now about to give. For I know your readiness (cf. viii. 11) of which I am in the habit of boasting

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf ; that, as I said, ye may be ready :

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

**on your behalf to the Macedonians**—Paul is writing from Macedonia—and the words of his boast were that **Achaia has been prepared** to make its contribution **since last year** (same phrase in viii. 10). On Achaia, cf. i. 1 : he says *Achaia* rather than *you*, partly because he is quoting the words of his boast, partly because the Corinthian Christians were not the only ones involved (cf. i. 1). **And your zeal stirred up the greater number** of them. The Macedonian liberality, regarded in viii. 1 as a gift of God, is here ascribed to the spur of the Corinthian example. There is no incompatibility between these reasons, the former is the more profound.

**3, 4.** Paul is so sure of the Corinthians and their enthusiasm that he has not hesitated to boast about them to the Macedonians. He does not need to remind them further, by letter, of their duty. **But** he is anxious to make sure that their enthusiasm will be crowned by action (viii. 10 f.) and that the money will be there when he arrives. To this end **I am sending** (*ἐπεμψα* epistolary aorist; cf. viii. 18) **the brethren**—Titus and his two colleagues (viii. 16–24) **that our boast about you be not**, by your lethargy, **made void in THIS respect**. He had boasted frequently of the Corinthians (vii. 4, 14), and they had many qualities of which he might well be proud (viii. 7), including the ready *will* to contribute (viii. 11); but liberal *deeds* (viii. 11) were needed as well as liberal intentions, and Paul was anxious that his boast should not prove to be an idle one in *this* very important respect. So he sends the delegates in advance, **in order that, as I repeatedly** (*ἐλεγον* impf.) **said** to the Macedonians, **you may be prepared** with the contribution; **lest by any means**, if any Macedonians should come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to say **YOU**) should be put to shame in the matter of this confidence (*ὑπόστρασις*, cf. ix. 17, literally, standing

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of bounty*, and not as of covetousness.

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall

ground ; then ground of hope, confidence). It is before Macedonians that Paul has made his boast (ver. 2) ; if *Macedonians* should see that it was an *empty* (*κενωθῆ*) boast, he will be disgraced. The Corinthians, no doubt, even more than he, as it is they who are the cause of his disgrace ; but he chooses to appeal to their sense of honour by concentrating their attention upon his own disgrace. *His* reputation (as well as *theirs*) is at stake in the collection, for he has boasted about their liberality.

5. Therefore, to avoid this disgrace (ver. 4), I thought it necessary to exhort or entreat the brethren (ver. 3) to go to you in advance, and to make up in advance your bounty promised in advance (so that; *ωστε* is understood) it might be ready as a real bounty (lit. *so as*, exactly as a bounty) and not as a niggardly gift. The three verbs compounded with *προ* (before) are very noticeable ; arrangements must be made before Paul's arrival, so that all will be ready when he arrives. *εὐλογία*, a *blessing*, usually in words, here in deeds—another name for the collection (cf. *χαρίς*, *ἀδόρτης*, viii. 19, 20) ; *πλεονεξία* is the greedy, grasping, ungenerous spirit which keeps all it can. If the collection is not to have this appearance, it must be given without delay.

#### *The Rewards of Liberality (ix. 6-11).*

6, 7. Paul now turns to the spirit in which the contribution must be made, and the sure rewards of liberality. Now (mark) this—the great principle which Paul is about to enunciate, that he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully (lit. *on the principle of blessings*, i.e. bountiful gifts, cf. ver. 5 : the plural suggests the rich variety) shall also reap bountifully. By *bountifully* and *sparingly*, Paul does not necessarily mean *much* and *little*

reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give* ; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound

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—the amount, great or small, has to be proportional to the means (viii. 11, 12) ; its acceptability depends upon the readiness (*προθυμία*, viii. 12), the cheerfulness, *hilarity* (*ἱλαρότης*, cf. ix. 7) with which it is given. The gifts are compared to a scattering of seed, which has its inevitable harvest ; when or how the harvest is gathered, it is not said. The situation contemplated in viii. 14 suggests that the advantages to be *reaped* are material ; in truth they are both material and spiritual (ix. 12), liberality produces gratitude and thanksgiving to God (ver. 11). The principle is one on which Paul elsewhere insists (cf. Gal. vi. 7, 8), that the reaping is unalterably conditioned by the sowing. And the money must be given not only quickly, but *gladly*, with a purpose that is *deliberate* (*προήρηται*) as well as sincere : *let each one (give) as he has freely determined with the heart, not with* (lit. *out of*) *a feeling of regret or pain at having to part with his money, or under compulsion*, constrained, for example, by appearance, public opinion, etc. : *for it is a CHEERFUL giver that God loves.* This last sentence is a quotation from the Greek version (quite unlike the Hebrew) of Prov. xxii. 8, whose *εὐλογεῖ* (God *blesses* a cheerful giver) has been changed into *ἀγαπᾷ* (*loves*). God's eyes, no less than the eyes of the churches (viii. 24), are upon the givers and their gift. The good collection must be the outcome of a good *spirit* : it must be, to reverse the language of viii. 21, comely not only in the sight of men, but of God.

8, 9. But where is the money to come from ? the Corinthians might ask. An answer has already been suggested by viii. 2 ; even a church that is persecuted and *in deep poverty* has contrived to give with astonishing liberality. Here the point is that God is the master of the world's resources, and He can bless the liberally disposed with the means of liberality. He *can* (8, 9) and He *will* (10, 11). In all financial efforts, and philanthropic

toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work.

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

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aspirations, *He* must never be lost sight of (*ὁ Θεός* at end of ver. 7 and near beginning of ver. 8). **God is able** (*δύναται*, first and emphatic—all *power* is with Him) **to make all grace**, gifts of every kind—here especially in the *material* sense—to abound unto you, in order that you, having always in everything all sufficiency, may not only have enough, but **to spare** for every good, *i.e.* charitable, work. *αἰτάρκεια* might mean contentment, but in this context, it more naturally means sufficiency of material resources. The fourfold repetition of *πᾶν* is very impressive. The sufficiency is entire, continuous, and covers every department of life: and as God can make His grace, expressed in material things, abound (*περισσεῦσαι*) to them, it is that they in turn may abound (*περισσεύητε*) in charity to others. The Lord of the world can give them enough for their own needs, and something *over* for the needs of others. **In the words of scripture:** “**He scattered**”—a fine expression for open-handed liberality—“**he gave to the poor, his righteousness abideth for ever**”—a citation from Psalm cxii. 9. In the psalm, this liberality is one of the features of “the man who fears the Lord” (ver. 1); and so it may be here, illustrating the last phrase “abounding unto every charitable work.” It may be taken, however, perhaps rather less naturally, to refer to God, the subject of the preceding sentence, as illustrating *His* liberality: He makes His grace abound, *He* scatters, gives to the poor, etc. It would be no objection to this view that it is against the original sense of the psalm. It is certain that, among the later Jews, *δικαιοσύνη* (righteousness) was often practically equivalent to *ἔλεημοσύνη* (*alms*), cf. Mat. vi. 1, where the *textus receptus* reads *ἔλ.* for the more correct *δικ.*; and that this may also be the case here is suggested by the third verse of the psalm where “righteousness” is parallel with “wealth and riches.” Even if the word have here its more general meaning of “righteousness,” the particular expression

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness :)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

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of that character under consideration is, for the moment, liberality ; so that we might almost render “his liberality abides for ever.”

10, 11. God not only has the power (*δυνατεῖ*, 8, 9) but the will to give. **And He** (in Isaiah iv. 10, *the rain*) **who supplies seed to the sower** and so blesses the seed as to turn it into **bread for eating** (A.V. connects this wrongly with the next verb) **will supply and multiply** the seed for **your sowing** (*σπόρος*, not *σπέρμα*, as before), i.e. will furnish you abundantly with means to sow broadcast your liberality ; **and** as the seed, blessed by God, comes back in the form of bread, so will He bless your liberality, *δικαιοσύνη*, here regarded as seed, and cause it, too, to bring forth fruit increasingly —**He will increase the fruits of your righteousness** (i.e. liberality). The fruits of liberality are described more particularly in ver. 12 as partly material, partly spiritual. The phrase *fruits of righteousness* comes from the Greek version of Hosea x. 12 (not supported by our present Hebrew text, which probably, however, should be emended). Verse 11 is attached to ver. 10 without any strict grammatical connection, the participle *πλουτιζόμενοι*, which hangs by itself, refers to the *you* of the preceding verse : **(you)** who in ver. 8 were described as having *in everything* enough, are now described as **being in everything enriched**, that is, in material resources ; but these riches are to be further translated into **all liberality**. By His gifts (*χάρις*, ver. 8) God makes liberality possible ; this liberality is rewarded by the power to be more liberal, and it increases among those who enjoy its gifts a temper of devout gratitude, for it is of a kind (*ἵπτις*) **which works out, through our mediation** as we distribute it, **thanksgiving to God**.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ;

13 While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto

*The Results of Liberality (ix. 12–15).*

12. This passage (12–15), whose general meaning is plain, though its constructions are rather complicated and uncertain, deals with some of the “fruits of righteousness” (ver. 10). The collection is here called a *λειτουργία* (*liturgy*), a word employed in classical Greek to describe some public service which the richer citizens discharged at their own expense : here it is a service to *the saints* (ver. 1, 12, viii. 4). In viii. 19, 20 the collection is said to be *administered* (*διακονούμενη*) by Paul, and some have supposed that the ministration (*διακονία*), to which he here (ver. 12) refers, is also his own : but verse 13, where the meaning is unambiguous, makes it practically certain that he means the ministration of *the Corinthians*. For the (*i.e.* *your*) ministration of this charitable service to the poor Christians is one which not only supplies (*ἐστὶ* with ptc.) the needs (*ὑστερήματα*, cf. viii. 14) of the saints, but further results in abundant thanksgivings (lit. “abounds by means of many thanksgivings”) to God. The results are both material, and spiritual ; not only are the hungry fed, but a new spiritual atmosphere is created among them. As Dr. Denney aptly says, “It is something to fill up further the measure of a brother’s needs by a timely gift, but how much more it is to change the tune of his spirit, and whereas we found him cheerless or weak in faith, to leave him gratefully praising God.

13. Verse 13, like ver. 11, is loosely attached to the preceding verse : the nominative participle *δοξάζοντες* refers to the saints of ver. 12 who will be helped by the collection. The collection, or *ministration*, *διακονία*, is a test (*δοκιμή*) of the Corinthians, just as affliction was a test of the Macedonians (viii. 2). Through the proving of your Christian character afforded by this charitable ministration, they, the poor saints of Judea, glorify God for two reasons ; firstly, for the

the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

subjection of *your confession* with regard to the gospel of Christ, and secondly (for) the liberality of (*your contribution to them and to all*). Their *δωματογία* was not, of course, the objective standard of their faith, but their subjective *confession* of it—here almost equal to “profession.” This was in a state of *subjection* with regard to (*εἰς* : the construction is not, “in subjection to”) the gospel of Christ: they submitted to its ideals, especially to its obligation to manifest practically the grace of God as proclaimed in the gospel of Christ. Whatever doubts had been entertained of the Corinthian church by the Judæan Christians, were now answered by this liberality, which was surely a very practical confession of faith working by love. The *Twentieth Century New Testament* gives the general sense well: “for your fidelity to your profession of faith in the Good News of the Christ.” This practical love of Gentile (Corinthian) Christians to Jewish Christians showed that the bonds of racial and religious difference had been broken, and the liberality the Corinthians had shown to the Judæans they would certainly be ready to show to *all*, but of such other charitable efforts we have no positive knowledge.

14, 15. Again the connection is loose. *ἐπιποθούντων* is a genit. absol., although it refers to the same persons as the nomin. *δοξάζοντες* (ver. 13): *δεήσει*, *with prayer*, is the dative of accompaniment. **And they**, the poor saints, would be so much touched by the Corinthian collection that, **with intercessory prayer for you**, they will long for closer intercourse with **you**, because of the abundant grace of God which has been poured upon **you**. The generous collection was to them the symbol of the grace of God, and they yearned to see those in whom such grace was manifest; and if they could not see them, at least they commended them to God in grateful prayer. How mighty a force must this gospel have been which thus brought Jew and Gentile together! yet it

manifests itself in the sphere of money. Paul saw the collection in its far-reaching spiritual effects, not merely as a relief of destitution ; and as he contemplates it all, he is almost overwhelmed by the wonder of it—not of the contribution itself, as some suppose, of the Christian generosity which inspired it, the devout gratitude with which it was received, the sense of Christian brotherhood which it deepened and strengthened—but by the wonder of the redemption wrought by Christ, that mighty force which created all these things. And, as in 1 Cor. xv. 57 he concludes his consideration of the resurrection, so here he concludes his discussion of the collection, with a spontaneous burst of praise : **Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.** The epithet *unspeakable* here (like *unsearchable* in Rom. xi. 33), can be fittingly referred to nothing less than God's supreme gift in Christ, the perfect exhibition of His *grace*, the source and inspiration of every human grace. The gifts of the Corinthians, of the Macedonians, all human gifts, are small in comparison with that unspeakable gift—but rays of that infinite light.

The whole difficult subject of the collection is handled by Paul with a delicacy that is only equalled by its earnestness. In the contribution of the Corinthians, Paul's own honour is at stake, for he has spoken to others with pride about them ; and still more, their own honour as Christian men. The eyes of the churches are upon them (viii. 24), the eyes of God are upon them (ix. 7). Their own material and spiritual future will depend upon their response to his appeal. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* They will reap exactly as they sow—no less and no more.

Further, they ought to give not only generously but cheerfully ; and how can they fail to do this—when they see what the fruits of their gift will be ? It will not only relieve distress, but it will create a new spiritual atmosphere for the men relieved. It will fill their hearts with gratitude, it will disarm suspicion, it will be a practical proof of the reality and power of the gospel, it will strengthen the sense of brotherhood, it will turn distant strangers into earnest, eager friends, who pray for their benefactors and long for a sight of their face. Was it not natural that, as Paul thought of all this, and of Him whose redeeming love had made it all possible, he should cry “**Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift ?**”

PAUL'S VINDICATION OF HIS  
APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY (x.-xiii.)

CHAPTER X

1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am*

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The most cursory reader cannot fail to perceive an abrupt difference in tone, as he passes from ch. viii. f. to ch. x. The former chapters were complimentary and affectionate ; this and the following chapters are heated, polemical, and in part ironical. There, the Corinthians were his beloved "brethren," of whom he was proud, and of whose generosity he was not afraid to boast ; here there are enemies in the camp—enemies who have been challenging his authority, and detracting from his credit, and who will therefore have to be summarily dealt with. They will have to be convinced, by its impact upon themselves, that Paul's authority is a very real thing, and that he is just as capable of exercising it before their eyes as he is by means of correspondence.

Indeed so striking is the difference of tone between this section and the preceding that some scholars have felt themselves obliged to regard this as a separate letter. Such a supposition, however, hardly seems to be necessary. Paul had just been urging the Corinthians to show that generosity for which he had given them credit. But what is the use of urging appeal or counsel of any kind upon a people among whom his authority is being boldly challenged ? There is a spirited and venomous opposition to him in the Corinthian church, which is not only undermining his authority, but imperilling the peace, unity and spiritual progress of the church. It is not unnatural, then, that in the closing chapters he should turn to deal with this opposition, and to vindicate, with dignity but emphasis, his challenged authority.

base among you, but being absent am bold toward you :

*Paul's Reply to the Charge of Cowardice (x. 1-6).*

I. The very first words show that Paul is writing with unusual emotion. He does not say simply *I entreat* (*παρακαλῶ*) *you*, but **I** (the emphatic *ἐγώ*) **Paul** (for the emphatic combination *I Paul*, cf. Gal. v. 2, Eph. iii. 1, Philemon 19) **myself** (*αὐτὸς*) **entreat you**. Perhaps from this emphatic introduction, it may be inferred that he wrote this passage with his own hand (cf. Philemon 19, 1 Cor. xvi. 21, Gal. vi. 11); or simply, that as he has already used the first pers. plu. so much, he now distinctly wishes to dissociate Timothy (i. 1) from what he is about to say. In either case, the words indicate that the passage to follow is of an intensely personal nature : it concerns *himself*. It is his authority that has been challenged ; and with great boldness he puts his personality into the very forefront of the discussion. There is no time when a man is apt to speak with more heat than in defending himself ; and Paul guards himself at the beginning, by reminding himself, that the appeal must be made by the **meekness and gentleness of Christ**. The language which follows is very strong, but Paul reminds the Corinthians that the motive which inspires it is the highest ; he speaks in the name and in the spirit of the Christ who claimed to be *meek* and lowly (Mat. xi. 29). *ἐπιεικία* is equitableness, the kindly spirit which does not narrowly insist upon its rights. The brunt of the charge against him is at once introduced : *I beseech you (I) who, as you say, to (your) face, am humble among you but courageous toward you when I am away.* A coward at close quarters, a brave man at a distance ; one who can write bold letters, but who lacks authority and courage, when he comes in person—such is their description of Paul. We have already seen that Paul was accused of fickleness and indecision (i.17) ; his conduct was easily misinterpreted by those who did not understand its inspiring motives. His caution and his tenderness were mistaken for cowardice : he is *ταπεινός* “lowly” in a bad sense, he has no power of self-assertion. It is significant that the epithet with which the Corinthians reproach Paul is used by Jesus in Mat. xi. 29 to characterize Himself—*lowly* of heart. For Paul’s opponents

2 But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh :

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there is no Christian aroma about the word. *Courage* was Paul's motto (iv. 16, v. 6, 7), and his courageous life is the best answer to this charge of cowardice : cf. Acts xxiv. 25 (the scene before Felix), Acts xxi. 13 (where he professes himself ready to die at Jerusalem).

2. What Paul entreated the Corinthians to do in ver. 1 is not said, it becomes plain in ver. 2 where the request is introduced by another and stronger word, *δέομαι*; this point is obscured by A.V. which renders both verbs by *beseech*. Yes, I beseech (*you*) that I may not, when I come, have to show courage with the confidence with which I count on being bold against some who count us as walking after the flesh. He refers to his enemies allusively as *some*; their charge is that he walks after the flesh, *i.e.* that his conduct is guided by unspiritual motives. The particular meaning of this general phrase must be determined by the context; here, apparently, the implication is that he is timid, complaisant, afraid of offending, has no divine courage or initiative. Paul only hopes it will not be necessary for him to show his courage. He can do more than write effective letters; if need be, he is prepared to come to them with his "rod" (1 Cor. iv. 21), and he is thoroughly *confident* (*πεποιθήσει*) that he will be more than a match for them. Note how *λογίζομαι* (and *λογισμός*, ver. 5) echoes through the passage (cf. vv. 7, 11); he has a *calculation* which meets and matches theirs.

3, 4. Into his defence Paul introduces military metaphors. His life is not only a *walk* (*περιπατοῦντας*), it is a *warfare* (*στρατευόμεθα*), not only against the evil that is in the world, but within the church itself, as proved by the assaults he is at present repelling. Of course, so long as he is a mortal man, he must walk *in* the flesh, subject to its limitations, which prevent him from doing and being all that he would; but he

4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of

does not walk *after*, according to (*κατά*) the flesh ; the principles on which he conducts his campaign (*στρατευόμεθα*) are determined purely by spiritual, not by natural, *carnal* considerations. **For, walking** as we do and as we must **in the flesh**, **we do not war according to the flesh.** Paul is no coward, as his opponents say (ver. 1), he is a warrior, and his campaign is not only courageous but successful. **For the weapons of our warfare**, fully described in Eph. vi. 11-17, **are not fleshly but**—here we expect him to say *spiritual*, but, as that is implicit in the contrast, he calls attention rather to their *power*, their invincible effectiveness—**divinely powerful to the demolition of strongholds**, *i.e.* of all the entrenched and mighty influences that defy the gospel. The weapons are *δυνατὰ τῷ Θεῷ*, not, as in A.V. mighty *through* (by means of) God,” but, as in R.V. “mighty *before* God” (in His eyes), practically equal to “*divinely, supernaturally*,” as in the description of the beauty of Moses (Acts vii. 20), and the size of Nineveh (Jonah iii. 3).

5, 6. Verse 4 is parenthetical, ver. 5 connects with ver. 3 ***we war, demolishing*** subtle imaginations, sophistical calculations (*λογισμοὺς* is an echo of *λογιζομένους*, ver. 2), **and every high thing that lifts itself up against the gospel**, through the proclamation of which comes **the knowledge of God.** The military metaphors are still kept up. The high things which rise in opposition to the gospel are, in general, those moral and intellectual tempers, habits, attitudes, which make one callous to the Christian appeal. An indication of what is meant will be found in the word *λογισμούς*, which perhaps suggests primarily the sophistries, or at least the arguments, by which the Greeks resisted the gospel. The weapons by which Paul demolished these arguments were not “persuasive words of wisdom,” but weapons of the spirit and power (1 Cor. ii. 4, *δυνάμεως*, as here *δυνατά*). Still the military metaphors are maintained ; ***we war, demolishing*** every stronghold of

God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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opposition, and taking captive every thought or device of the mind (*νόημα*), leading it into the land of (*εἰς*) obedience to Christ. The *mind* that formerly defied and resisted Christ and His gospel, is now by these mighty weapons of Paul the evangelist, reduced to *obedience*. The completeness of his triumph is suggested by the repetition of *πᾶν*; the gospel weapons are powerful to reduce *every* stronghold; alike in the heathen and in the Jewish world Paul has many a time seen this surrender to Christ. Paul is a soldier, his campaign is successful, and he is ready to punish the rebels, or, as he says, to avenge every disobedience (*παρακοή* opposed to *ὑπακοή*). He is not the coward they think he is, and he will show them that, if need be, when he comes. How he will assert his authority against the recalcitrants, he does not say—perhaps as in 1 Cor. v. 5; but clearly it is no idle threat, he only hopes he will not have to put it into execution (ver. 2). In any case, he will only do it when YOUR obedience shall be fulfilled. Paul deals in love and with a tender regard for the church as a whole, from which he carefully distinguishes the recalcitrant minority; and he will only discipline the offenders, when the full obedience of the church, as a whole, has been demonstrated.

Paul is clearly stung by the reproach that he is at heart a coward and brave only on paper. But the reproach draws from him a noble defence in which he significantly compares his life to a warfare—one however in which the weapons he wields are invincible, and the campaign one long triumph. He knows from experience how proud and powerful is the opposition to the gospel; but he knows, too, the power of the gospel to overcome it, to *demolish* it (note *καθαιρεσιν*, *καθαιροῦντες*). A warrior like Paul, with such a record of successes behind him, is not likely to be terrified by the slanders of his opponents; he will come and meet them face to face, and discipline, in some stern way, their rebellious spirit.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of

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*Paul's Authority and Mission Have Been Divinely Entrusted to Him (x. 7-18).*

7. The connection between this paragraph and the preceding depends upon the manner in which the first sentence is construed. There are three possibilities. It may be taken (a) as in A.V. interrogatively, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?" or (b) as in R.V. affirmatively, "Ye look at the things that are before your face"; or (c) imperatively; "Look at what is before your face." The choice seems really to lie between (b) and (c). The objection to (c), though it is far from fatal, is that the verb ( $\betaλέπετε$ ), if imperative, would more naturally have come first than last. If imperative, it will be Paul's appeal to the Corinthians to open their eyes to facts, to contrast his claims and his achievements with those of his opponents. If (b) is adopted, Paul reproaches his opponents with seeing only the things before their eyes—their tests are external. Their claim *to be Christ's* is based probably upon some external and religiously indifferent fact, such as their having seen the earthly Jesus, or their having been acquainted with the leaders of the Jerusalem church (cf. 1 Cor. i. 12). It is clear at any rate from xi. 22 that Paul's opponents are Judaizers. Perhaps, on the whole (c) is preferable. **Look at the facts before your face.** If any one has confidence in himself that he is Christ's, let him think again (*not* on the other hand) and consider ( $\lambdaογιζέσθω$ , cf. ver. 2) this carefully in his own mind that **we too are Christ's just as he is.** At this point Paul only claims bare equality; as the argument advances, he advances his claims. He does not here prove his claims as in 1 Cor. ix. 1 f. by pointing to his success at Corinth, or to his vision of the risen Christ, as in 1 Cor. xv. 9; the proof, which he adduces later (xi. 21-30) lies in what he has suffered for the gospel's sake.

8, 9. Paul's claim to be Christ's then, is at least as valid as theirs. But more: he possesses, as he has just claimed in

our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed :

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and

vv. 2-6, an authority which has been given him by the Lord Himself. Yes, and if I boast (*not*, as A.V. "though I should boast": he has already boasted in 2-6) somewhat extravagantly about our authority, which THE LORD gave me for your upbuilding and not for your demolition (cf. the similar statement of the source and function of his authority in xiii. 10), I shall not be put to shame—when next he comes to Corinth, they will find that he knows how to exercise his authority; and this he says, that I may not give the impression of scaring you, as it were, out of your wits by my letters, of which he had at least written two—1 Cor. and that referred to in 1 Cor. v. 9. The impression they get from his letters will be confirmed, as he tells them in ver. 11, by the impression they will get when he comes in person. The authority which his opponents dispute was given to Paul by the Lord Himself, their authority has no such source; and its object was the edification, and not the destruction of the Corinthian church, unlike the authority of his opponents, such as it was, which was exercised not to the edification of the church but to its destruction. In modern Greek, *ως ἄν* has degenerated into *σάν*, as, like : *σάν προδότης*, like a traitor. Verse 9 has a fine definition of the function of authority—"to build up and not to pull down." The strongholds of opposition to the gospel have indeed to be pulled down (same word, *καθαιρεσθίν*, ver. 4), but this in order that the men themselves may be built up.

10, 11. Those who had accused Paul of being courageous at a distance (ver. 1) meant that he could write bold and vigorous letters. For his letters, they say, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speaking contemptible (lit. despised as of no account). "This passage," says Stanley, "is the only instance of the very

powerful ; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

11 Let such a one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

words used by St. Paul's opponents. It thus gives a contemporary judgment on his Epistles, and a contemporary description of himself." Whether *φησίν* (one says, or he says, with reference to the *τις* of ver. 7, or the *such a one* of ver. 11) or *φασίν* (they say) is read, the meaning is the same. The effect produced by Paul's letters, admitted here, is attested in the striking description of vii. 8-11. The depreciatory reference to himself, however, is capable of various interpretations. Tradition describes him as insignificant and awkward in appearance ; and it is Barnabas, and not he, who is worshipped by the people of Lystra as Zeus (Jupiter, Acts xiv. 12). He had the temperament of the ecstatic (1 Cor. xiv. 18, 2 Cor. xii. 1), and no doubt that highly strung nervous nature which accompanies it (1 Cor. ii. 3) ; and it is altogether probable that his public appearances were not impressive to Greeks who loved poise and beauty of body. Nor can his speaking, if we may judge by his letters, have satisfied the fastidious taste of the Greeks, though his overwhelming earnestness must always have been impressive (Acts xiv. 12). It is possible, however, that the reference here is to neither of these things. We are apt to interpret "bodily presence" as if it meant "bodily appearance" ; but in reality, *presence* here points back to the *present* of ver. 2, a verse which helps in the interpretation of this one. When Paul is *bodily present*, he is weak—in the language of ver. 2, not bold, courageous : in other words, ineffective. His words, which were not persuasive words of wisdom (1 Cor. ii. 4), would not impress the subtle Greeks with their love of eloquence. His words and his presence alike were ineffective, they came to nothing. Such is the charge, and Paul replies : **Let such a one consider this** (they are so fond of such considerations, calculations ; *λογιζέσθω* is intended to recall the use of the word in vv. 2, 5, etc.) **that our conduct, when we are present, will correspond exactly with the words of our**

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

**letters when we are absent.** Paul plays here on the familiar Greek contrast between *λόγος* and *ἔργον*, word and deed. He will show them how slanderous is their charge that he is a hero at a distance and on paper, but a coward at close quarters. Everywhere and always he is a brave man. If that is the impression of him they get from his letters, it is a true impression, as they will find when they see him. The specific application, in the context, is; “as we are by letter, so (*shall we be*) in deed”; but probably the word to be supplied is rather *we are* than *we shall be*. Paul is always the same: as he writes, so *is* he (and this they will discover in the near future).

**12, 13.** We now enter upon a passage (12-16) bristling with difficulties. Paul has just claimed to be a courageous man, as brave in deed as he is in word. But, he ironically continues, there is a certain kind of courage he does not profess to have. **For we have not the boldness** (*τολμᾶμεν*, cf. *τολμῆσαι*, ver. 2) **to rank ourselves among or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves.** This charge of self-commendation they had levelled at Paul (iii. 1, v. 12), whereas it was they themselves who were guilty of the practice. By a word-play which it is impossible to reproduce in English (two compounds of *κρίνειν*, with *ἐν* and *σύν*), Paul affirms that he has not the courage to range himself among or alongside of these men. Men who commend themselves, having nothing but themselves with which to measure themselves, can only end by boasting *immeasurably* (*ἀμετρα*); and Paul frankly confesses that he has not the courage to join such a company. The two sentences that follow are very difficult. The introductory words create the impression that Paul is about to speak of *his own* habits—*ἄλλὰ αὐτοί*, etc.: “but we ourselves, measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with ourselves—” but at this point we are suddenly pulled up by

13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

a verb in the *third* person *οὐ συνιᾶσιν*. If the text be correct, we must retrace our steps and refer *αὐτοὶ* to Paul's opponents : "But they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, have no understanding," no sense, no intelligence : that is, it is stupid to attempt to measure oneself, without some standard other than oneself. Instead of *συνιᾶσιν*, however, *συνιοῦσιν* is also read, and the *αὐτοὶ* can be retained for Paul by regarding *συνιοῦσιν* as a dative, the sentence running on into the next verse, and the subject being resumed by *ἡμεῖς δέ*. Thus : "but we ourselves measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves with ourselves, who are devoid of understanding (as they suppose), *we* will not boast beyond our measure." This, however, even if we had the *τοῖς* before *οὐ συνίοντι*, which is practically necessary, is distinctly artificial. Besides the *ἡμεῖς δέ*, *we*, appears to be in implicit contrast with the preceding *αὐτοὶ* which must then be translated by *they*. The Western text, which omits *οὐ συνιοῦσιν* *ἡμεῖς δέ*, secures a comparatively smooth reading : "we ourselves, measuring ourselves by ourselves and comparing ourselves with ourselves, will not boast immeasurably." But the very simplicity of this reading is suspicious. If it be original, how could it ever have been altered to the much more difficult reading of the other MSS.? It is more credible that the difficult reading is the original one, and that the omitted words were dropped to secure a simpler text. The question of the text is by no means an idle one ; the simpler text makes Paul say that he measures himself by himself, the longer text makes him say that that is unintelligent—that is what his opponents do. The difference, however, is more apparent than real ; for, in the former case, Paul would be measuring his actual self by his ideal self, by the self to which he is committed by divine appointment (ver. 13). The sense probably is then : but **THEY**, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are unintelligent. **WE**,

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things without *our measure*, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope,

however, who acknowledge a higher standard than ourselves, **will not boast beyond measure**, that is, beyond the measure that is appropriate for us; the others boast immeasurably, because they have no measure or standard beyond themselves. Not so does Paul boast, but according to the measure of the line which God allotted us as a measure, that we should reach as far as you. *kavóv* is a measuring-line, then a standard, norm (cf. Gal. vi. 16); it is used here in a general way to indicate the sphere of work divinely assigned to Paul, much as we should use the English word "line." The evangelization of the Gentiles was Paul's "line" (cf. Gal. ii. 8, 9). To this he kept, by this standard he consented to be tried, for work done within this limit he was prepared to boast, at least "in the Lord" (ver. 17). It was in recognition of his divine commission to the Gentiles that he had gone as far as Corinth (*you*); and this very commission, broad as the world, was bound to carry him further still (ver. 16).

14. Paul has a divine right to be in Corinth; to preach there, as it is heathen ground, is part of his "line." **For we are not stretching ourselves beyond (our bounds)**, as we should be doing if **our sphere did not reach** (lit. "as if we were not reaching") unto you—he maintains in ver. 13 that it did extend thus far—for **we came** (*φθάνω* is used almost in its modern Greek sense of *arrive*, not in the classical sense of *anticipate*) **as far as you** at Corinth, in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

15, 16. The thought of ver. 13, which was interrupted by the parenthetic ver. 14, is resumed, and the introductory words are the same—"not boasting beyond (our) measure." The point there stated positively is here put negatively. There he boasted of work done in the sphere divinely assigned him—work among the Gentiles; here the point is that it is *his own* work he boasts

when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.

16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

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of, not (like his opponents) of work done by other men. Stanley well remarks that the arrangement by which Paul was to work among the Gentiles "was doubly infringed by the appearance of Jewish teachers at Corinth ; the sphere of the Apostle of the Gentiles was invaded by Jews ; the sphere which St. Paul had won for himself by his own labours, was appropriated by, those who had no original claim to it." Part of the tragedy of Paul's missionary career was that his steps were dogged by these Jewish teachers (cf. Ep. to Galatians). He could truthfully describe himself as **not boasting beyond measure, in other men's labours, having hope, that, as your faith grows, we may through you attain to our true greatness in our evangelical work, in accordance with our divinely appointed line (*καρών*) or sphere of work, and even unto glorious abundance, so as to bring the gospel even into the regions beyond you, instead of boasting, as my opponents are doing, in work that is another man's line, of things ready to hand.** Paul did the pioneer work, and they took the credit for it. Paul's principle is to go where the gospel has not yet been preached. He has been as far as Corinth, but his hope and intention are ultimately to go to Spain (Rom. xv. 24) ; it will depend upon the Corinthians (*ἐν ἡμῖν*) and upon the progress of their faith, when he will be able to go to the far west, and achieve his great evangelical commission.

17, 18. The word *boast* has occurred with great frequency throughout this section. It has been forced upon Paul by the challenge of his opponents : but once he has taken the word up, he uses it fearlessly, and shows its relative justification. They have compelled him to vindicate himself, and he does

so with no false modesty. He knows that he is the great pioneer evangelist: he claims nothing less than the whole heathen world for his sphere of operations; and he knows that his work has been crowned by the most signal success (4-6). But it is the Lord's work rather than his, it is through the grace of God that he is what he is, and has done what he has done (1 Cor. xv. 10); and of this, in conclusion, he reminds himself afresh, using, as he had done before (1 Cor. i. 31), an ancient word of Jeremiah (ix. 24); but let him that boasteth boast in the Lord (*the Lord* is probably God, as in Jer., rather than Christ). For, as for the man who commends himself, as his opponents are doing (ver. 12) HE (*ἐκεῖνος*) is not the man who is approved in the sight of God, but it is he whom the Lord commends.

It is interesting to note how easily Paul is carried forward from the discussion of local or personal affairs to the most daring thoughts and the most brilliant imaginations (cf. i. 17 ff.). The larger aspects of his teaching and ministry are never far from his mind, and it is these that support and inspire the detail. Here his character and authority have been challenged. In his defence, he is led to think of his mission in life, which is to preach the gospel of Christ. He has an overwhelming sense of being divinely called to that work. His authority has been conferred upon him by no other than the Lord Himself: he has a divinely appointed "line." But this line goes out throughout the whole world. It stretches to Corinth, to Rome, to Spain. He has a vision of a Christian world, and his soul glows at the contemplation of it. When the Corinthian faith is mature enough (ver. 15) and their obedience complete (ver. 6) he will be free to turn to the distant lands at the western end of the Great Sea, there to proclaim the gospel of his Lord. Only then will he achieve his true greatness—greatness in the service of the Lord and the gospel—when he has carried the good news to the regions beyond Greece (ver. 15).

## CHAPTER XI

1 WOULD to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly : and indeed bear with me.

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ.

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*Paul's Boldness in Asserting his Apostolic Authority is Due to his Fear That the Corinthian Fidelity May Be Corrupted by his Opponents (xi. 1-6).*

1, 2. Paul has been forced, by the challenge of his opponents, into an argument which is to him distasteful. Boasting is uncongenial to him, however congenial it may have been to his opponents (x. 16). In this case it is indeed necessary ; but he describes it deprecatingly as *folly* ; and he asks the Corinthians to tolerate it just a little longer, as the matter which has extorted this self-vindication from him is one of the gravest importance. **Oh that you would bear with me in a little more of this boasting**, to which I have been reluctantly forced, and which may well be called **folly**. **But I do not need thus to entreat you** : I have already had experience of your indulgence, **you DO (καὶ) bear with me**. This seems better than to take ἀνέχεσθε as imperative ; “nay, *do* bear with me.” After this little touch of banter (*ἀφροσύνη*), the old earnestness is resumed. Nothing less is at stake than the fidelity of the Corinthians to their betrothal vows. Christ is the bridegroom, the Corinthian church is the bride, Paul is the bridegroom’s friend who has espoused the one to the other, and he has all the interest of the bridegroom himself in preserving the purity and fidelity of the bride. These things are being seriously imperilled by Paul’s opponents ; the Corinthian church is in danger of being seduced, and Paul is jealous for her honour with a jealousy inspired by God Himself, what he calls *a jealousy of God*, so called also partly because the honour of God is at stake. It is no little affair of his own that leads Paul into his impetuous vindication of himself ; it is not a personal, but a *divine* jealousy—and that is why he asks them to bear with him. **For I am jealous over you**

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another

with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed (the middle, as here ἡρμοσάμην, is in classical Greek generally used of the bridegroom himself, and the *active* of the father or the bridesman) you to one man, to present (you) as a pure virgin to Christ at His coming. The marriage takes place when He comes, the intervening period is the time of betrothal. The church, like the maiden, must be *pure*, chaste; she must belong to and be faithful to *one man*, whereas the fidelity of the Corinthians is being drawn off to *another Jesus* (ver. 4). The Old Testament conception (cf. Hosea i.-iii.) of the relations between Jehovah and Israel as a wedding bond is here transferred to the relation between Christ and the church.

3. This was Paul's hope and ideal that the Church would be presented *pure* to Christ. But now, however, he is afraid that she, like Eve (Gen. iii.), may be seduced. The same diabolic tendencies are in the world now as then. Then Satan came in the form of a serpent (in Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2 the serpent and the devil or Satan are identified); now he works through Paul's Judaistic opponents. The comparison with Eve is happy: her temptation is the first and great temptation (in O.T.); and the church has been represented in ver. 2 as a *woman*. I am afraid lest perchance, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, your thoughts should be corrupted and so diverted from the simplicity that is set on Christ and on Him alone. He is the *one man* (ver. 2), simplicity of affection can have but one object. After *simplicity*, Westcott and Hort following some MSS. add (in brackets) καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος, and *purity*. It is possible, however, that this is an addition, explanatory of the word *simplicity*, and suggested by the word *pure* above.

4. Paul has good reason to be afraid that the fidelity of the Corinthians may be corrupted; for he sees them "tolerating," if not welcoming, the men whose gospel is very different from his own. These opponents of his are intruders, they *come* from elsewhere, from Judæa—at any rate the leading spirits; and the situation would be all the more dramatic, if, as is possible,

spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

there is one man who stands over against Paul, leading and concentrating the opposition in his own person. ὁ ἐρχόμενος may mean “any one that comes,” but there almost seems to be something semi-official about the phrase, “he that is coming.” He (or *they*, as the case may be) proclaimed *another* Jesus; not another *Christ* or Messiah,—for to them as to Paul, Jesus was the Messiah—but another conception of Jesus, not the crucified Saviour, whom Paul preached (1 Cor. ii. 2). They may have laid stress on their earthly connection with Jesus, on knowing him “according to the flesh.” It is not a bare possibility that Paul is contemplating—“if he *were to preach* another Jesus, you *would bear with him*”—it is a fact; the Greek mood necessitates that interpretation—“he who cometh *is preaching*” (*κηρύσσει*). Another (ἄλλος) Jesus means a different (*ἕτερον*) gospel and a different spirit. Paul’s grievance is that the Corinthians tolerate with pleasure all this subversion of the gospel, while he who founded the church and gave them the true gospel, thus espousing them to the one man Christ, has to beg for a little toleration for himself (notice the echo in ἀνέχεσθε of the ἀνέχεσθε in ver. 1). He expresses himself ironically; “you put up splendidly, nobly (*καλῶς*) with such a man and such a message.” For if the (new)-comer preaches another Jesus whom we did not preach, or ye receive a different spirit from that which ye received at baptism, or a different gospel from that which you voluntarily (thus is ἐδέξασθε distinguished from ἐλάβετε) accepted from me at your conversion, you grandly bear with such a man and such a message! ἀνέχεσθε (indic., not imper.) is to be preferred to ἀνέίχεσθε, you *bore* with him. The spirit introduced by the Judaizers and their gospel is the spirit of legalism, bondage (Rom. viii. 15); for a similar contrast between their gospel and Paul’s, cf. Gal. i. 6–8.

5, 6. “And if,” Paul implies, “you bear so nobly with them, why not with me?” For I count myself to be in no respect inferior to these pre-eminent apostles of yours? Who are these? Hardly Peter, James and John. Paul certainly refers to

6 For though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

them in a very independent way in Gal. ii. 6, 9: and as their names would be frequently upon the lips of the Judaizers at Corinth, some of whom may even have brought from these apostles letters of recommendation, it is just possible that this phrase, "the supereminent apostles," refers to them, not of course ironically or disrespectfully—Paul would simply be tossing back upon the Judaizers their own pet phrase. But any reference to these apostles would be somewhat irrelevant in this context. It is more probably the leaders of the Judaizing party themselves to whom Paul ironically refers as the supereminent apostles, the same men as are in ver. 13 roundly called false apostles. He may perhaps be inferior to those men in oratorical devices; but where the gospel is concerned, those things count for nothing. The thing that counts is *knowledge*, the knowledge of God and of His saving will and purpose in Christ; and this he has made it abundantly plain that he possesses, "I am not a whit behind those fine apostles of yours; but though I am unskilled (*ἰδιώτης*, a layman, with no professional knowledge of the thing under discussion) in speech, yet I am not in knowledge; nay in every respect I have made (that) plain in my relations with (*εἰς*) you—not "*to you*." If *ἐν παντὶ* and *ἐν πᾶσιν* are both original (they may be duplicates) the first would be neut. and the second masc.—"among all men," *φανερώσαντες* has no expressed object; it must mean either that he has made the *knowledge* itself plain, or made plain the fact that he has knowledge, even if he is rude in speech. The reading adopted by A.V. *φανερωθέντες* (having been manifested), is also excellently attested, but perhaps suspicious owing to its simplicity; in this case, it is Paul who has made *himself* plain, intelligible, in all his relations to the Corinthians. Eloquence is no proof of apostleship; of infinitely more importance is knowledge, the knowledge of God, and this the apostle *manifestly* has.

*Paul's Reason for Refusal of Maintenance From the Corinthians*  
(xi. 7-15).

Paul claims to be no whit inferior to his "apostolic" opponents. If he has not the rhetorical skill they have, that is of no conse-

7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

quence : the thing that matters is knowledge, and that he has. But, his opponents retort, Paul can be no true apostle, however plausible his claims : he has refused to accept maintenance from the Corinthians, and such a refusal, they apparently argued, would have been impossible to one who really possessed apostolic dignity. They cannot see into the noble soul of Paul ; here, as everywhere, their tests are material and external, "according to the flesh." Paul himself had already argued (in 1 Cor. ix.), with great force, for the *right* of an apostle to be maintained by the churches which he served ; but, on occasion, he might show more true greatness by waiving this right. An apostle *may* claim this maintenance, said Paul ; he *must*, said his opponents. It is their malicious misinterpretation of his conduct and attitude in this respect that Paul meets in this paragraph.

7. Or did I commit a sin—he ironically asks—in humbling myself in order that **YOU** (*ὑμεῖς*) might be spiritually **exalted**, *lifted up* out of the degradation of your heathen ways into the blessedness of the gospel, **in that I preached to you the gospel of God for nothing?** In *ταπεινῶν* (*abasing myself*) perhaps we hear an echo of the actual charge made by his opponents, who may have frequently and in various connections applied the epithet *ταπεινός* to him (cf. x. 1) ; no apostle he, but a *low*, mean-spirited fellow, a coward. He demeaned himself in their eyes, and conclusively proved that he was no apostle, by preaching for nothing (*δωρεάν*) ; the irony is heightened by the full and solemn phrase "*the gospel of God*." It is not the "other" false gospel about another Jesus that *he* preaches (ver. 4). In suggesting that it was perhaps a *sin* to preach the gospel of the grace of God for nothing, Paul is using the language of bitter irony ; cf. xii. 13, where the allusion is the same—"forgive me this *wrong*." Paul seems to have been more than usually hurt by their ungenerous construction of his generosity. The free grace of God is most eloquently proclaimed by the preacher who illustrates it in his own conduct.

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man : for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied : and in *all* things I have kept myself from being troublesome unto you, and so will I keep *myself*.

8. Paul had the right, as an apostle, to maintenance from the Corinthians. He had a reason, however, which he gives below (ver. 12) for not accepting anything from them. In part, he supported himself, while at Corinth, by working at his trade with his own hands (Acts xviii. 3), though he courteously refrains from thrusting this fact upon them ; but for the rest, he received his support from other churches. **OTHER** churches I plundered, taking wages from them that I might minister unto **YOU** without recompense. There is a pointed contrast between the *others* and *you* (*ιμων*) ; and the language is very vigorous ; the contribution from the other churches—the Philippian, for example, which seems to have been particularly generous (Phil. iv. 15 f.) as the Macedonian churches generally were (2 Cor. viii. 2)—Paul characterizes as *robbery* (the motive of which was the service of *you*), though from another point of view it is simply his wages (for *δψώνιον* cf. 1 Cor. ix. 7). In Corinth, as the sequel showed, the most scrupulous care must be taken to give no offence, and Paul would be the less exposed to reproach, if he accepted nothing from the Corinthians for his evangelical services.

9-11. Whatever Paul took from other churches, he never once made himself a burden to the Corinthians. **And when I** at any time felt want (*ιστερηθείς* aor., not “*was in want*”) during my stay (*παρὼν* pres. ptc.) among you I never made myself a numbing burden to anybody. *καραυρκῶ* (from *νάρκη*, stiffness, torpor), “to lie like a stiff weight on,” is said by Jerome to be a Cilician word. **For the brethren**—probably Silas and Timothy, who had stayed at Beroea (Acts xvii. 14) and afterwards rejoined Paul at Corinth (Acts xviii. 5)—when they came from the poor, but generous (viii. 2) churches of Macedonia, brought a further (*πρὸς*) supply for my

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

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want (*ιστέρημα* echoes *ιστέρηθείς*). And, supplied as I thus was from other sources, in every respect I kept myself during my stay at Corinth from being a burden to you, and in the future I will (so) keep myself. The reason for this determined course Paul will soon state (ver. 12), but the fact itself is so important that he repeats it in a form that invests it almost with the solemnity of an oath. The truth of Christ is in me, and by this I do hereby most solemnly assert that, so far as I am concerned, this boast of mine that I preach gratuitously shall not be silenced (lit. shall not have [her mouth] stopped—*καύχησις*, boasting, being, as it were, personified) in the regions of Achaea; his practice at Corinth would be his practice throughout the whole province (i. 1). As the truth of Christ is in Paul, his statements are made with the full force of his Christian personality, and are inspired with an absolute obligation to sincerity and truthfulness (cf. i. 17 ff.). This solemn assertion shows how very earnest and determined was Paul's resolution to take nothing from the Corinthians. The friendly disposed among them might well feel offended at this refusal to be helped by them, and ask Why? They might think such a policy argued lack of love for them. You ask, Is it because I do not love you? Certainly not; for God knows that I do love you.

12. At last the real reason for Paul's refusal of support from the Corinthians is now given. Now what I do in keeping myself from being a burden to you (ver. 9), I will also continue to do; for this reason, that I may cut off this particular (lit. *the*) occasion from those who desire an occasion of being found, in the matter whereof they boast, on a level with US. This last sentence has been construed and interpreted in a multitude of ways, but the simplest seems

13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

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to be this. The second *ivα* is not co-ordinate with the first ; it does not therefore express the motive for the action of the principal clause—"This I will continue to do in order that they may be found even as we"—that is, that Paul's opponents may be reduced to the moral necessity of preaching for nothing ; there was little likelihood of that. Rather is the second *ivα* dependent on the three words preceding and explanatory of them, expressing what *the opponents* desired. Their desire was that, "in the matter of which they boasted," that is, the apostleship, they should be on terms of equality with Paul. But they accepted support, while Paul did not ; though it pleased them to construe this as an admission that Paul was no true apostle, the obvious unselfishness of Paul's policy was, to candid men, a sufficient refutation of their argument. Paul therefore in this respect had a distinct advantage over them, and he was determined to retain it. The apostolic equality with him to which they aspired he rendered impossible, by adopting an unselfish policy which their avarice would not let them imitate.

13-15. **For such men**, men of this selfish and unscrupulous character, *are*—not "*pre-eminent* apostles," as their followers claim, but—**FALSE** apostles, traitors to the idea of the apostleship and of the gospel, **crafty workers**, busy indeed, but in pulling down, not in building up (x. 8) and serving their own interests and prejudices when they claim to be serving the gospel, all the time (pres. ptc.) **transforming themselves into apostles of Christ**. They were no apostles of His, they were really servants of Satan ; but so skilfully did they disguise themselves that they looked like apostles. **And no wonder**, for **Satan Himself**, whose realm is darkness, **transforms himself into an angel of light**. God and the angels dwell in light and their nature is light (cf. Acts xii. 7). The reference must be to some apocalyptic tale, as there is no Old Testament story which alludes to the transformation of Satan into an angel of light ; neither Job i. 6 nor 1 Kings

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness ; whose end shall be according to their works.

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xxii. 19-23 implies this. It is nothing remarkable, then, seeing he is such a master in the art of transformation, if his servants also transform themselves and become as servants of righteousness. Righteousness may be here used in the large ethical and religious sense ; it is the cause of righteousness, of light, of God, of Christ, that they pretend to serve ; in reality, it is the cause of unrighteousness, of darkness, of Satan, of themselves, that they serve. Possibly, however, *righteousness* here is tinged with the technical sense which it so often has in Paul, the righteousness of God (Rom. i. 17). Those who are ministers of that righteousness are the true evangelists. These men are the false, whose end shall be in accordance with their works. Their fate will be determined by their conduct. They are guilty of the deepest sort of lie—the transformation of moral values (Isaiah v. 20, Mark iii. 22)—and their punishment will be as terrible as their sin.

The strong words at the end of the paragraph, in which Paul anticipates for his opponents a terrible end, show how deeply he has been exasperated by their tactics. He loved the Corinthian church, it was he who had espoused her to Christ ; and these Judaizers were doing everything in their power to pervert the church by the proclamation of another Jesus and another gospel, and to discredit the authority of the man who had founded that church. They cannot appreciate his lofty motives in refusing the support which he could justly claim, and they even turn his unselfishness into an argument against his apostleship.

Little wonder, considering the interests at stake, that Paul saw in those self-styled “apostles of Christ” the ministers of Satan, the representatives of the prince of darkness, cunningly disguised as angels of light. Bousset raises the interesting question whether Paul’s strong language and attitude were altogether justified. “Perhaps we ought to think of his opponents as narrow no doubt, but at the same time as convinced of the justice of their view. The means which these

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

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petty spirits adopted to combat the apostle were certainly odious and ugly. But Paul's own manner of conducting the contest is similarly marked by no small passion. On the other hand we must in justice concede that he had reason for his anger and that his vigour in the heat of the great contest was only too intelligible. Paul is no saint, just as little as Luther." Certainly Paul, as we have seen in ch. x. had much to provoke him. He had done the hard work, and they had stepped in to appropriate the fruits of his labour. But it is not for such personal reasons that Paul here calls them ministers of Satan ; it is because their work is a menace to the purity, and even to the existence, of the gospel. They have no insight into the mind and conduct of an apostolic man like Paul (ver. 7 ff.) still less into the mind of Christ. The emphasis which they laid upon externals (cf. ver. 22) was altogether alien to the genius of the gospel of Jesus. Their Jesus is "another" Jesus, their gospel and their spirit are different. It is this that explains and to some extent justifies the vigorous language in which Paul describes them and their fate.

*The Apostle's Boast (xi. 16-33).*

The apostle recoils from the necessity (xii. 11) which has been thrust upon him by his opponents, of defending his claims to be an apostle. It involves boasting, and this Paul naturally shrinks from. It is folly (vv. 1, 17), it is *oὐ κατὰ κύριον*, not in the spirit of the Lord (ver. 17) ; but he has been driven to it by the challenge and insinuations of his rivals, and in this section, after a little ironical fore-play (vv. 16-21) he girds himself deliberately to the task, and in an impetuous passage of great eloquence, he brings before us some of the more thrilling incidents of his perilous and crowded life, and vindicates triumphantly his claim to the apostleship by pointing to the things that he has suffered for the gospel's sake (cf. vi. 4-10 ; 1 Cor. iv. 9-13).

16-17. Again I say, as I said (implicitly) before (in ver. 1), let no one think that I am a fool. Paul is well aware of the

17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

unseemliness and the *folly* of boasting ; but he is on his defence, and he must state his case whether they think him a fool or not. In any case, however (*εἰ δὲ μή γε, but if ye do not grant my request to be regarded as a sane man*), listen to me (lit. *accept* me, give me a welcome) even though it be as a fool, that I too as well as my opponents, to whom you give so cordial a welcome, may boast just a little bit (*μικρόν τι*). I am well aware that what I speak, I do not speak in accordance with the mind and spirit of the Lord, or under His direct inspiration ; He was meek and lowly (Mat. xi. 29), and boasting was not His way. Paul is careful in his defence, to safeguard by anticipation, the character of his Lord which might be compromised by the boasting of a disciple and an apostle. It is not after the Lord, but as in foolishness (note how he rings the changes on this word half seriously, half ironically) that Paul speaks with (lit. *in*) this proud confidence of boasting, on which he is about to launch. The last clause goes with the whole sentence : in this boasting, it is not as an inspired man, but as a fool that he speaks. Some render *ὑποστάσει* here (cf. ix. 4), “in this matter, subject, of boasting,”—not impossible, but less forcible and appropriate here.

18-20. Seeing that many—he means more particularly his opponents, the false teachers, who were “many” (ii. 17)—boast after the flesh, of external things, such as their Jewish descent (ver. 22), their connection with the Jerusalem church or its leaders, with Christ, etc., I also will glory ; he does not say, but the sequel (ver. 22) shows that he partly means after the flesh. Even in regard to the external things of which they make so much, Paul is “not a whit inferior” to them (ver. 5). And he goes on with biting sarcasm to say that he can surely count upon a patient hearing from them, for their practice shows that they listen to fools with pleasure. For ye put up (*ἀνέχεσθε* an echo of ver. 1, where he hopes that

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise.

20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though

they will put up with him and his *folly*) **gladly with fools**—the next verse shows that by *the foolish* ( $\tauῶν ἀφρόνων$ ) he means his opponents—**being wise men (yourselves)**; a most ironical addition—the *wise* Corinthians may well show their wisdom by tolerating a little folly. There is an effective word play in the Greek, the two contrasted words  $\alpha\phi\rho\acute{\nu}\omega\nu$  φρόνιμος being juxtaposed—*sensible* and *senseless*. The argument is: if they tolerate fools, they are bound to tolerate him, for he too is a fool (his boasting makes him such). The next verse is a severe description of the conduct of his Judaistic opponents in their dealings with the church. The allusion is obvious, but skilfully expressed by the indefinite  $\epsilon\imath\tau\iota\varsigma$  (if any one). **For you put up with any one who lords it over you**, as I was falsely said to do (i. 24) and who **reduces you** (cf. Ep. to Gal.) **to the bondage** of legalism (these men turned the Corinthians into slaves, Paul made *himself* their slave, iv. 5), **who devours you** by demanding heavy contributions (as Paul refused to do) for his support, **who catches you** cunningly (cf. ver. 13, as men catch fish—same verb  $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\acute{\beta}\omega\mu\epsilon\nu$  in Luke v. 5) and thus gets you into his power, **who lifts himself up** proudly and insolently, **who smites you in the face**. A blow on the face was one of the greatest of insults (Mat. v. 39, Acts xxiii. 2). It seems almost incredible that such an act should have been possible within the church, but the impression made by the passage is confirmed by i Tim. iii. 3, Tit. i. 7 where it is laid down that the bishop must not be a “striker.”

21. The irony of this whole section (16-21) is very striking, and nowhere more than here. **To (my) shame** (lit. “by way of dishonour”) **I admit that** (lit. “I say how that”) **WE** ( $\iota\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) **were** too **weak** to indulge in vigorous measures like these. He had been called a *weakling* (x. 10), he ironically admits the charge, *he* at any rate is too feeble to treat the

we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

22 Are they Hebrews? so *am I*. Are they Israelites? so *am I*. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am I*.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I *am more*; in labours more abundant, in

church as his opponents treat it. But all the same he has a courage of his own, which he is not afraid to match with theirs; in **whatever matter any one is bold** (of course—he ironically adds—it is in folly that I speak, for the speech he is about to make is a boast) **I too am bold**.

22. After this preliminary ironical movement, in which Paul has raised our expectations to the highest as to what the contents of his “bold” boast will be, he begins the statement of it in brief and weighty sentences which, at the very outset, demolish the claims of his opponents to pre-eminence even in the external matters on which they laid so much stress. **Are they Hebrews?** (more vivid than *they are Hebrews*) **so am I**. **Are they Israelites?** **so am I**. **Are they the seed of Abraham?** **so am I**. He could claim Jewish descent as well as they. *Hebrews* is the national name, *Israelites*, their sacred name—as the people of God; as *Abraham's seed*, the highest term of all, they are heirs (Gal. iii. 29) of the promises (Gen. xii. 1-3).

23. These matters, important as they seemed to his opponents, were of little consequence to Paul, and he dismisses them very curtly with a *kayw* (*I too*). But when he presents his claim to be a *minister of Christ*, his style at once expands. **Are they ministers of Christ?** Here he is not content with a bare *So am I*. He had already called them *ministers of Satan* (ver. 15); and if they, even on their own showing, have any claim to be considered ministers of Christ, he has *more*. But before he says this and thus launches himself upon an account of his career, he interpolates, **I speak in madness**. Perhaps this, like the other references to his “folly” in boasting, is largely ironical; but it is possible to suppose that it is meant much more seriously. The words “*minister of Christ*” have

stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

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a steady and solemnizing effect, and Paul feels that it is not only "not according to the Lord" (ver. 17) but sheer madness, to be boasting (though he is driven to it) about matters so sacred. I have a **MORE** abundant claim than they to be considered a minister of Christ; for consider what I have suffered for His sake.

In labours more abundantly than they (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 10). If *περισσοτέρως* be pressed in its comparative meaning, Paul begins by contrasting himself with his opponents—his labours are more abundant than theirs. Already in the third clause, however, he loses sight of them (*ὑπερβαλλόντως*, *exceedingly*), and from that point on, confines himself to his own career. It is just possible, therefore, that *περισσοτέρως* has the force of a superlative (very abundantly). The following recital shows us how little we really know of Paul's missionary experiences from the book of Acts. In prisons, as at Philippi (Acts xvi. 23 f.) more abundantly, in stripes (explained in next verse) above measure, in the jaws of death often, "delivered evermore to death for Jesus' sake," iv. 11, in peril of death at Damascus at the outset of his Christian career (Acts ix. 23 f.), stoned almost to death at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19), in some deadly peril in "Asia" (2 Cor. i. 8).

24, 25. The general words of ver. 23 are now illustrated by concrete detail. From the Jews I five times received the punishment (inflicted with a leather scourge, so severe that the victim sometimes died under it) of forty stripes, save the one which later practice remitted, lest by chance the limit of forty prescribed by law should be exceeded (Deut. xxv. 3). Three times I was beaten by Roman officials with rods, as at Philippi (Acts xvi. 22): once I was stoned, at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19), three times I was shipwrecked,

26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren;

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

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none of these occasions being recorded in the book of Acts, as his shipwreck on the voyage to Rome (ch. xxvii.) occurred later, a full night and day of twenty-four hours I spent in the deep, probably on the plank of a ship which had been wrecked, as in Acts xxvii. 44.

26, 27. His missionary journeys were many, and by land, as by sea (ver. 25) often accompanied with great peril, from swollen rivers, brigands, etc. *In* journeyings often, *in* perils from turbulent rivers, treacherous to ford or swim; *in* perils from brigands who infested the country roads of Asia Minor, and waylaid travellers. Men were as cruel as nature; Paul was in perils from his Jewish kinsmen, as at Damascus (Acts ix. 23), Jerusalem (Acts ix. 29), etc.; *in* perils from the Gentiles, as at Philippi (Acts xvi. 20), Ephesus (Acts xix. 31); *in* perils in the city, as at Damascus, (Acts ix. 23), Jerusalem (Acts ix. 29), Ephesus (Acts xix. 31); *in* perils in the wilderness perhaps of Arabia (Gal. i. 17), but probably also elsewhere: *in* perils in the sea already graphically illustrated (ver. 25); *in* perils among false brethren, more terrible than the perils of the sea. Gal. ii. 4 illustrates this point, though Paul's Jewish rivals at Corinth were illustration enough, and in the word he probably takes a side glance at them. *In* labour (ver. 23) and toil—Paul's work was hard and wearying—in many a wakeful night, whether kept awake by fatigue, by manual (2 Thes. iii. 8) or missionary work (Acts xx. 7); *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings (apparently, in such a context, not deliberate but involuntary) often, *in* cold and nakedness or scanty attire, as perhaps after shipwreck,

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

**28, 29.** But there was more than physical peril and pain. Even more than the physical strain was the spiritual one involved in his unceasing interest in the churches he had founded. **Besides the things outside** this description (or the things *which I omit*) is the thing that **presses upon me daily**, my anxiety for **ALL the churches**. The anxiety (*μέριμνα*) Paul had for the churches was as real and intense as that which the ordinary man has about food and clothing (Mat. vi. 31, *μεριμνήσητε*). Both the reading and the meaning of *ἐπιστασίς* are doubtful. *ἐπισύνστασίς* is also read, which might mean, “the daily *combination against me*.” *ἐπιστασίς* may mean *care*, and be parallel to “anxiety”; but it is perhaps better to take it in its primary etymological meaning, and regard it as more closely defined by the following *μέριμνα*: “the daily pressure upon me, namely, the anxiety for all the churches.” This anxiety is illustrated by ver. 29. **Who is weak** in faith or courage, **and I am not weak** in sympathy with him? Paul became all things to all men, for the gospel’s sake, therefore “weak to the weak” (1 Cor. ix. 22). He was not, for example, contemptuous, but considerate of the scrupulous brother who could not eat meat that had been offered to idols (1 Cor. viii.). **Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn** with indignant, sympathetic pain? When a Christian brother is snared by sin, the apostle’s heart glows with the pain and shame of it.

**30, 31.** Verse 30, with its repetition of the word “weakness” from ver. 29, happily mediates the transition between the preceding verses and those which conclude the chapter. Indeed it is possible, but not necessary, to begin as some do, a new section here, ending it at xii. 9 or 10. Paul is still substantiating his “boast” by recording his experience, though the last

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me :

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incident of the chapter, that of his escape from Damascus, acquires a certain independent importance from the solemn introductory asseveration of ver. 31. So difficult have some scholars found it to regard this preface as belonging only to the incident described in vv. 32, 33, that they have taken it as the introduction to the account of Paul's ecstatic vision in ch. xii. and regarded xi. 32 f. as inserted perhaps by way of after-thought. But this incident may have had for Paul a significance which it cannot have for us, who are ignorant of the circumstances, and the difficulty is not insuperable of regarding the solemn appeal in ver. 31 as prefacing the narrative in vv. 32, 33.

If boasting is necessary, I will boast of the things that belong to my weakness, as illustrated alike by the incidents he has narrated and that which he is about to narrate. It was not in his own strength that he had surmounted all those deadly perils, it was the "grace of God" (1 Cor. xv. 10) that made him the victor that he was. The God and Father (not "God and the Father") of the Lord Jesus knows, He who IS (*ὁ ὁν*) blessed for ever, that I am not lying. This very solemn appeal to the God who *knows* (cf. ver. 11) comes at this point with the effect of a surprise; but the incident which it is designed to corroborate had no doubt its peculiar significance for Paul. His experience at Damascus was his initiation into the sufferings of his apostleship. The appeal to the Father of Jesus is very relevant here, as it was for Jesus' sake that he encountered the danger he is about to relate (cf. iv. 11).

32, 33. In Damascus, which perhaps for diplomatic reasons had been ceded by the Romans to Aretas, the governor under Aretas IV the king of the Nabataean Arabs, kept guarding the city of the Damascenes (the last word is superfluous), no doubt at the gates, to seize me, and through a window of a house on the wall I was let down in a basket (of wicker work?) by the wall, and escaped his hands. This probably

33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

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occurred about 37 A.D. on Paul's return to Damascus after his sojourn in Arabia, and consequently about three years subsequent to his conversion (Gal. i 17 f.). The incident is referred to in Acts ix. 23-25 where, however, it is the Jews who seek Paul's life. Probably Aretas was acting on the instigation of the Jews who were numerous and powerful in Damascus. It is possible that Paul's flight on this occasion was interpreted by his opponents as cowardice, and that the incident was used to make him ridiculous. But he himself is not ashamed of it. He glories in his weakness, and in his deliverance he sees the gracious hand of God.

This brief, impetuous description which Paul gives of his life Stanley calls "one of the most valuable historical portions of the New Testament." It shows us how much more strenuous and terrible was the missionary life of Paul than even the book of Acts would lead us to suppose. It was crowded with peril and persecution, beset by the relentless forces of nature—her stormy seas and roaring rivers—and by the still more pitiless and venomous forces set in motion by men—by bigoted Jews, stern Romans, unscrupulous brigands, and, worst of all, false brethren. He points to these experiences in vindication of his claim to be an apostle—to the things that he had suffered "for Jesus' sake" (iv. 11, xii. 10). It takes more than rhetoric to make an apostle (ver. 6), it takes knowledge of the mind of Jesus, readiness and capacity to suffer for the gospel's sake.

The picture he draws is one of almost superhuman heroism, and the boast, for which he had with such elaboration and skilful irony prepared the way, is more than justified. And the crown and climax of all this "pressure" which would have crushed the life out of any but a giant, was his anxiety for all the churches. As he faces the swollen floods, traverses the roads infested by robbers, and looks at death again and again upon the sea, he bears evermore on his mighty heart the thought of his weak and tempted brethren among the churches he had founded, and identifies himself with them. His anxiety for the churches does not swallow up his care for the individual

## CHAPTER XII

I It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

members of whom those churches were composed ; nay, rather it is the individual Christian brother, in his struggles and falls, far more than the organization, of which he thinks. If *any one* is weak, Paul feels and shares his weakness.

Here then is the kernel of his defence. He has the welfare of all the churches upon his heart, he loves their individual members and deals with them in a spirit of the keenest and most intelligent sympathy ; and finally, for their sakes, and for the sake of their common Lord, he is willing and glad to endure to the uttermost, to pursue a career that was beset by continuous perils, and that once and again brought him face to face with death.

*The Vision and the Thorn* (xii. 1-10).

In this section, Paul continues his "boast" ; but here it takes the form of an unusually intimate disclosure, and it constitutes a splendid climax to the recital of the experiences by which he vindicates his claim to be an apostle. Just as his escape from Damascus (xi. 32 f.) may have exposed him to the charge of cowardice, so his "revelations" may have won for him the reputation of being a visionary of perhaps rather questionable sanity. Here in the most solemn and deliberate manner, he claims for them reality, and in particular recounts an overwhelming experience which had befallen him fourteen years before, when he had been in Paradise itself, and had heard words unutterable. Intimately connected with this is the account of the thorn in his flesh, which had been sent as a spiritual discipline, to check the pride which the vision might have caused ; and this discipline was the occasion of a fresh manifestation of the all-sufficient grace and power of Christ. He may surely then boast of the weakness (xi. 30, xii. 9) which led to such a display of divine power. It is but another form of "glorying in the Lord" (x. 17).

I. The text of ver. 1 is exceedingly confused, but the two great types are represented by A.V. (*κανχᾶσθαι δὴ οὐ συμφέρει*

**2** I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.

*μοι· ἐλεύσομαι γάρ)* and R.V. (*κανχᾶσθαι δεῖ· οὐ συμφέρον μέν,  
ἐλεύσομαι δέ*). The confusion between *δεῖ* and *δή* is natural. The question is not, after all, one of great importance, as the meaning is, in either case, much the same: Paul is well aware of the general inexpediency of boasting, and regrets its necessity. R.V. emphasizes rather the necessity, A.V. the regret. Considering that Paul has been driven to his boast in self-vindication (ver. 11), R.V. seems more probable, especially as not only the idea but even the phrase ("boasting is necessary") has occurred before (xi. 30). Whatever connection his opponents may have had with Christ, Paul is "no whit inferior" (xi. 5), he can claim to have had revelations from Him. **Boasting is necessary: it is not indeed good** (*profitable, advantageous*) either for me or for any one else—there is the danger of spiritual pride (ver. 7); but as my opponents have coerced me into it (ver. 11), I will proceed further and **come to visions and revelations of** (*i.e.* vouchsafed me by) **the Lord**. The revelations come through the visions. It is hardly probable that these visions and revelations were all comprised in the one great experience he is about to recount. The plural (cf. ver. 7) more naturally suggests that they occurred more than once; and this is confirmed by Acts xviii. 9 (vision), Gal. ii. 2 (revelation).

**2.** The story is told with a certain solemn and rhythmic repetition, and curiously enough, Paul speaks of himself in the third person, suggesting that his part in the matter was purely passive. It was as if the man who enjoyed that unutterable experience could not be himself, the Paul who was so acutely conscious of his weakness. **I know a man in Christ;** what he is about to tell happened to him as a Christian. Had he not been *in Christ*, either it would not have happened, or at any rate it would not have taken the form it did. Bousset points out that, according to the Talmud, Paul's ecstatic experience was paralleled by the experience of some contemporary Jewish Rabbis. The idea of an ecstatic ascent to

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth ;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

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heaven he may well have shared with the Judaism in which he had been brought up, but this particular vision came to him as a *Christian* man ; it was *the Lord*, i.e. Christ (ver. 9) whom he recognized as its source ; it came upon a Christian mind, and its contents were Christian. This happened **fourteen years ago** (43 A.D. ?) and therefore is not to be connected with his conversion which had occurred about twenty years before ; it was a never to be forgotten day. But Paul has no idea how it happened—**whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knoweth** (cf. xi. 11, 31). Paul is so little himself (cf. the use of the third person) that he does not know whether he was caught up *bodily* into heaven, or whether his spirit had left the body, and he enjoyed this amazing experience, as it were, in a disembodied state ; **such a one**—the *man* whom he knows—**caught** swiftly (*ἀρπαγέντα*) **up** like Philip after his interview with the eunuch (Acts viii. 39, *ἀρπάσεν*), like the child of the woman in Rev. xii. 5 (*ἀρπάσθη*), and as those who are alive at Christ's coming will be caught, according to 1 Thes. iv. 17, **as far as the third heaven**. Jewish conceptions varied as to the number of the heavens ; some maintained two, others three, others seven. If we are to distinguish between the third heaven here, and Paradise in ver. 4, the idea implied by the passage is probably that there were three heavens, and Paradise beyond. *Ἐως, as far as,* suggests the infinite spaces through which Paul seemed to traverse.

**3, 4. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knoweth.** The rhythmic repetition has a solemn effect, as if the mind of Paul were dwelling on the mysterious scene with reverent reminiscence ; but possibly it is also intended as an introduction to the statement **that he was caught up into Paradise**, this being regarded not as the same but as another and higher experience. Paradise, originally the hunting-park of a

5 Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I

Persian king, then a pleasure garden, then the blissful abode of the righteous in Hades, where they await the resurrection; here no doubt it is what is called in Rev. ii. 7 "the Paradise of God," beyond the highest heaven. Some scholars regard Paradise in this ver. as synonymous with the third heaven in ver. 2. It is hard to say, but perhaps the second statement (*caught up*) is intended to suggest a second experience, similar but higher. He saw *visions* (ver. 1) and heard words unutterable, which it is not lawful or possible for a MAN to put into language. What those words were we do not know,—perhaps, if we may judge by Jewish analogy, the praises of heavenly choirs (cf. Rev. xi. 15). In any case, the words which fell from celestial lips are unutterable by *mortals* (*ἀνθρώπων*). They ring evermore in Paul's ears and in his heart; but he must not and he cannot translate them into human speech.

5, 6. On behalf of such a one (*τοῦ τοιούτου* masc., not neut. cf. *τὸν τοιοῦτον*, ver. 2) I will boast, because, strictly speaking, that "man," caught up to the blissful sights and sounds of Paradise, is not himself at all; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in my weaknesses. They are my own, and they give divine grace its opportunity to manifest itself, in me; therefore so far from being ashamed I boast of them. Paul has already characterized his boasting as "folly" (xi. 1). This, however, is only ironical; he does not really wish any one to think that he is a fool (xi. 16), and the vision he has just related shows that he has ample ground for boasting, were he so inclined. For if I desire to boast, I should be no fool, for I should be speaking the truth: the unadorned truth, which Paul could speak if he would, furnishes opportunity enough. But he does not wish to thrust upon those whom he would convince evidence which it is beyond their power to verify; he leaves them to judge of him by the evidence of their eyes and ears. Therefore I forbear further boasting about visions, revelations, etc., lest some one

forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was

should think of (*εἰς, in regard to*) me beyond what he sees me to be, or hears from me. There is a touch of irony about this perhaps; the whole course of Paul's vindication, and, above all, the necessity for it, shows that there was little danger of him receiving more than his due from the Corinthians. But the principle is a sound and valuable one, that to convince men, we must not mystify them, but meet them with proof which they can understand and verify. What men see us to be, or hear out of our own lips (*ἐξ ἐμοῦ*), will after all be a pretty good indication of what we are.

7. Westcott and Hort take the next words "and by the exceeding greatness of the revelations" with the preceding, and put a period after them. It must be confessed that the connection of the words with the rest of the sentence would then be neither obvious nor natural. The reason for taking the words thus arises from the difficulty, if not impossibility, of construing them naturally with the following sentence beginning, according to MSS. that are usually the best, with *διὸ οὐα* ("Wherefore, in order that"). Some MSS. however omit *διὸ*; then the reading is smooth (though this fact may possibly have led to its omission), and the sense good. **And that I might not be over-exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelations** (this last clause being placed before *οὐα* for emphasis, exactly as in ii. 4, *τὴν ἀγάπην οὐα γνῶτε*) **there was given to me** by God, who watches over the interests of the spirit, and takes stern measures to rebuke spiritual pride, a **thorn for the tormenting of the flesh, a messenger or angel** (*ἄγγελος*) **of Satan, that it (or he) might buffet me** not once (aorist) but continually (pres.) **in order that I might not be over-exalted**,—a danger which the apostle must have very keenly felt, considering that he begins and ends his short sentence with the mention of it. *σκόλοψ* is literally a stake, and Stanley sees in this a suggestion of the agony of impalement—"a stake as of impalement, on which I writhe like one

given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

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crucified"; but, as in Ezek. xxviii. 24 σκόλοψ is used to translate "brier," and is paralleled with ἄκανθα, "thorn," the ordinary translation may be safely accepted. Innumerable guesses have been hazarded as to what this thorn was, but in the nature of the case, the truth can never be known. It is no doubt the same infirmity as Paul refers to in Gal. iv. 13-15, and there, as here, it is something that tries his *flesh*, his bodily nature. This fact renders some explanations of the thorn impossible; it cannot have been remorse of *conscience* for the past in which he persecuted the church (I Cor. xv. 9), nor temptation to blasphemy or unbelief. Nor, though he has called his opponents ministers of Satan (xi. 15, cf. angel of *Satan*) can the thorn in the *flesh* well refer to them. Applied to the risks to life and limb, incident to his missionary career (xi. 24-27) it is less inappropriate, but very far from probable; Paul would hardly have begged for a remission of this kind of suffering, besides, the thorn must be something more specific than that. Catholic commentators have been led by certain stories of monks to conjecture that it was the temptation to lust, a conjecture which may be summarily dismissed as altogether inapplicable to Paul. Doubtless we have to look for the thorn in some bodily ailment, which was apparent to the eye (Gal. iv. 14) and which was an impediment to Paul's activity. Disease of the eyes (cf. Gal. iv. 15), earache, headache, nervous prostration consequent on malarial fever, or produced by his colossal exertions, etc., have been suggested; but there is a large body of competent and quite reverent opinion inclined to the belief that the reference is to epileptic seizures. Paul compares the effect of this visitation of the angel of Satan to that of a blow with the fist (*κολαφίζῃ*: cf. I Cor. iv. 11, Mat. xxvi. 67). "What," asks Bousset, "is the usual effect of such a blow? If it be violent, the person struck sinks to the ground. That then was a feature of Paul's infirmity, that he suddenly sank to the ground as if smitten by an invisible stroke." It was as if some demoniac power, an angel of Satan, who sends infirmities upon mortals (Luke xiii.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

16, Job ii. 5), had struck him to the ground. The theory of epilepsy, though it has much to recommend it, is not without difficulties. Professor Denney, who admits that "there is no religious interest in affirming or denying any physical explanation of the matter whatever," yet points out that "epileptic attacks, if they occur with any frequency at all, invariably cause mental deterioration," whereas the epistles are evidence that Paul's mind grew year after year in the apprehension of the Christian revelation. Professor Findlay (*Galatians*, p. 66) even goes so far as to say : "To call him *epileptic* is a calumny. No man so diseased could have gone through the Apostle's labours, or written these epistles." Heinrici makes another important objection : "How the Galatians could ever have brought themselves to welcome an epileptic 'as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus' (Gal. iv. 14) is hard to understand, when we consider that in the ancient world the Jews regarded it as possession, the Greeks and Romans as a special punishment of God." On a question for which the evidence is so meagre, dogmatism would be inappropriate.

8, 9. However ignorant we may be of the nature of Paul's infirmity, we know at least its spiritual value. At first it seemed indeed to be an unqualified impediment to Paul's activity ; so much so that **for this** (*angel of Satan*; masc. rather than neut., because of the words "depart from me") **I besought the Lord**, that is apparently *Christ* (ver. 9) not once or twice but **three times**, as no answer came the first time or the second, **that he might depart from me**, as Satan, his master, departed (same word *ἀπέστη*) from Jesus after His temptation (Luke iv. 13). **And at last He gave me His everlasting answer.** The perfect here *εἰρήκεν* appears to be suggestive ; "He spoke the word, and that word remains, and will remain for ever." "**My grace is sufficient for thee,**" eternally sufficient (pres. *ἀρκεῖ*). Thou dost need no more than my grace. "**The Lord as it were put these words into Paul's mouth,**" says Bengel, "that following

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

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them up he might say: 'O Lord, Thy grace is sufficient for me.' " Paul prays to the Lord as to a living Person with whom he has intercourse (cf. ver. 1) and is conscious of being answered by Him. How the answer came, he does not say, but the sequel shows that to Paul it was real. **For strength is being perfected in weakness**, it manifests itself most abundantly and amazingly, when it operates in the element of (*ἐν*) weakness. The general form of the statement is superior to the specific form with *μου* (*My* strength; so A.V.), though the specific form is correct as an interpretation. Paul was conscious that the strength in which he overcame was from above; it was his weakness that gave it its opportunity to manifest and develop itself.

9, 10. If weakness thus gives grace its opportunity, one may surely be well content with his weakness. Rather, then, than pray to have the thorn removed, **will I boast in my WEAKNESS** (cf. xi. 30) in order that the **POWER**—practically the same as the *grace*—of Christ may tabernacle upon me, encompassing me. "The image is that of the Shechinah or *σκηνή*, the glory which was the symbol of the Divine presence in the Holy of Holies, descending upon the faithful, cf. John i. 14, Rev. vii. 15, xxi. 3" (Bernard). **Wherefore**, conscious as I am of having my weakness strengthened by Christ, **I am well content, for Christ's sake, with weaknesses**, which he further particularizes—with insults, with the various hardships to which I am forced (*ἀνάγκαις*), **with persecutions and the distresses** with no seeming exit (cf. iv. 8) to which they reduce me. **For when of myself I am weak, then I am strong in the imparted strength of Christ.**

The religious greatness of Paul is nowhere more conspicuous than in this account of his thorn in the flesh, marvellous alike

in its candour, its depth, and its simplicity. Mark how he links it to the story of his beatific vision. Twice he says that the thorn, which is a “gift” of God ( $\epsilon\delta\theta\eta$ ), was sent to deliver him from the temptation to spiritual pride. One who has enjoyed such rapture is in peril, unless he receives continual buffeting ( $\kappa\lambda\alpha\phi\zeta\eta$ , pres.). He did not see his suffering at first in that light; this interpretation only comes to him after his prayer has been answered by being refused. But it is an interpretation which shows how well Paul understood the subtle temptations to pride that are apt to accompany unique spiritual gifts and experiences. The vision needs the thorn.

On the relation of the thorn to the vision Bousset has some suggestive remarks, though they rest on the assumption that Paul's infirmity was of an epileptic nature. “One cannot fail to recognize that what Paul here relates of his infirmity and what he has told before of his visions and revelations, have an inner connection with one another, which the apostle may have unconsciously felt, when he put them both together. We may then suppose that the entire visionary, ecstatic peculiarity of Paul, as it appears here and in other places, had its basis in large measure in his pathological disposition. We may even believe that Paul's visions and revelations were often immediately connected with the epileptic attacks. In these hours of his life—now he saw heavenly sights, and heard the praises of Paradise, and again he felt himself struck with the fist by the angel of Satan.” Whether the connection between the vision and the thorn be so intimate or not, at any rate it is certain that by some chronic and distressing ailment Paul's activity was seriously hampered; and both his missionary career and his religious serenity become all the more wonderful when we consider this physical handicap. He thought he could have done more for his Master, had the handicap been removed, and he prayed for its removal. “It might have seemed at the time to all,” says Stanley (*Corinthians*, p. 569), “as it did on this occasion seem to Paul himself, that the cause of the Gospel would have been better served, had he been relieved from his infirmity and gone forth to preach and teach with unbroken vigour of body and mind, his bodily presence strong, his speech mighty and powerful. But history has answered the question otherwise, and has ratified the

Divine answer, in which the Apostle acquiesced." It is nothing less than wonderful to see how, vexed with this sorrow and pain, whatever it was, he cheerfully endured the colossal hardships of which he has told us in the preceding chapter, and moved about the world, planting churches and preaching the gospel everywhere. If his infirmity was a fact—and we have his own intense and threefold prayer in evidence of that—the grace which tabernacled upon him must have been an infinitely greater fact; for it made him not only content amid distresses and persecutions manifold, but it made him strong to do perhaps the mightiest and most far-reaching work for God that mortal man has ever done.

An interesting question is raised by this passage touching prayer to Christ. *The Lord*, whom Paul entreated for the removal of the thorn, might well be God; but the context seems to be decisive in favour of Christ. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in weakness." That is the answer to the prayer. Paul goes on: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me." It is impossible not to hear in these words an echo of the answer; in that case, the answer must have come from Christ, and the prayer been directed to Christ.

The threefold prayer of Paul for the removal of the thorn naturally recalls the threefold prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane for the removal of the cup (Mat. xxvi. 44). "It is of the profoundest religious interest and importance to note that, in the ordinary sense, neither of these prayers was answered. The cup had to be drained to the dregs—"My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"—and the thorn was not removed. But it is of equal interest and importance to note that, in the profoundest sense, those prayers were both answered. The will of God was done. With fine insight, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews remarks that Jesus 'in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, *was heard* for His godly fear; ' and Paul was so strengthened by the grace of Christ that he actually learned to glory in his weakness, because in it he was conscious that the power of Christ rested upon him." (See my *Prayers of the Bible*, p. 101.)

11 I am become a fool in glorying ; ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

*The Signs of an Apostle (xii. 11-13).*

**11-12.** Paul's elaborate vindication of his apostolic authority is drawing to a close. He deeply regrets its necessity. In spite of ver. 6, it is in reality *folly*, to which no wise man would willingly stoop, but he has been *driven* to it. **I HAVE become a fool** (emphasis on the verb), but **it is YOU** (*ὑμεῖς*) **who have compelled me** to it. **For**, instead of being forced, as I have been, to commend *myself*, **I ought to have been commended** without ceasing (*συνισταθαι*, pres. inf., not aor.) **by YOU**. I have the best of reasons ; **for I was in no respect inferior to the pre-eminent apostles** (the leaders among his Judaizing opponents, see xi. 5), though, as a matter of fact (*οὐδέν* not *μηδέν*) **I am nothing**—it is only by the grace of God that I am what I am (1 Cor. xv. 9 f.). **The signs indeed of one worthy to be considered an apostle were wrought**—by himself, of course, but by the use of the passive voice he humbly allows his own personality to fall into the background—**among you in all manner of steadfast endurance**, despite fatigue and opposition, **by miracles**, which Paul here describes under three aspects, **signs**, as acts of spiritual **significance**, **and wonders** that cannot fail to arrest conventional eyes, **and mighty works**, literally *powers*, which are the manifestations of a higher power (ver. 9)—“deeds of significance, deeds of wonder, deeds of power” (Massie). According to 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2, the conclusive sign of an apostle is his success : here, as in Rom. xv. 19 (cf. Acts xv. 12), Paul appeals to miracles as signs. What miracles he performed at Corinth we do not know ; but we may perhaps consider as typical of these, the healing of the lame man at Lystra (Acts xiv. 8-10 ; cf. xix. 11, xx. 7 f., xxviii. 3-6). **Patience, steadfastness, and works of mercy**—these are the signs of an apostle.

13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

*fastness*, is not here itself a sign, but the element, the spiritual atmosphere in which the signs were wrought.

13. For what is there in which you were slighted in comparison with (lit. "made inferior beyond") the other churches unless (*it be*) that I in my own person (*αὐτὸς ἐγώ*) did not lie like a benumbing weight upon you (*κατενάρκησα*, word and thing same as in xi. 9) by throwing the weight of my maintenance upon you? This distinction which he conferred upon the Corinthian church—a proof of his "more abundant love" (ver. 15)—he sarcastically describes as an *injustice*, for which, with bitter irony, he prays to be forgiven. Forgive me this injustice.

*Indignant Repudiation of the Suspicion of Fraudulent Dealing*  
(xii. 14-18).

14, 15. Paul has no more intention of burdening them with his support in the future than he has done in the past. See! —a vivid appeal—this is the third time that I am ready to come to you. The words very probably (cf. xiii. 1), though of themselves not necessarily, imply not only that he is in readiness for the third time, but that he is coming for the third time—in other words, that he has been in Corinth twice already, and I will not be a burden to you, for it is not yours, but YOU, that I seek—not your money or your help, but your souls (ver. 15),—your salvation (1 Cor. ix. 22). The Corinthians were his "beloved children," and he, as their spiritual father (1 Cor. iv. 14, 15) will show to them the unselfish and solicitous regard that a father shows to his children, his duty and delight being rather to provide for them than to be provided for by them; for the children ought not to

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you ; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you : nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you ?

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**lay up for the parents**,—though this, of course, is not meant to deny filial obligation—but **the parents for the children**. Paul, however, like the good father that he is, does more than *lay up* for his children ; he spends, and he spends *himself* utterly (*ἐκ*) for them and their spiritual welfare. **And I for my part** (*ἐγώ*), so far from burdening you with my support, will most gladly spend all that I have, and be myself spent to the uttermost for your souls. The following two clauses (reading *ἀγαπῶ, I love*) are best taken as an independent sentence (so R.V., Westcott and Hort), not (reading *ἀγαπῶν, loving*) as a conditional sentence appended to the preceding (so in the main A.V.). The latter meaning would be, “If, loving you the more, I am loved the less, I will spend and be spent for your souls, that is, until the true relationship between us is established.” This seems stilted ; the meaning therefore probably is simply ; if **I love you the more, am I loved the less?**—is this malice and ingratitude the return for the more abundant love I lavished upon you ?

**16-18.** Paul next deals with the unworthy suspicion, which clearly had been voiced, that, though his own hands are clean, he has yet, through his agents, helped himself to the collection of which they had had charge. **Granted** (lit. so *be it*), you say, that **I did not personally** (*ἐγώ*) weight you down with the burden of my support, but like the crafty man that I am (*ὑπάρχων*) **I caught you by cunning** (*craft* and *cunning*—the very things he disclaims in iv. 2)—securing my ends through my agents. This base charge may be easily refuted by a simple appeal to fact. On any previous occasion—Paul had no doubt frequently had occasion to communicate thus with the important and turbulent Corinth—**did I take advantage of you** (cf. vii. 2) **by any of those whom I have sent**

18 I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ; but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

(ἀποστέλλω more solemn, or at least formal, than πέμπω, ix. 3) **to you.** *tura* is irregular; when Paul wrote it, he may have intended to follow it up with some other verb than ἐπλεονέκτησα. **I exhorted Titus** to go on such a mission, **and**, taking precautions similar to those described in viii. 18-22, **sent along with him the brother**, possibly the brother mentioned in viii. 22, though the reference is of course to some previous mission—perhaps that from which Titus returned with his reassuring news of the Corinthians (vii. 6 ff.). **Did Titus take any advantage of you?** asks Paul indignantly. Surely not. And Titus was Paul's envoy, acting in his *spirit*. From Titus' policy they may infer Paul's. **For did we not—he and I—walk in the same spirit?**—primarily perhaps the holy spirit, to which any such “over-reaching” as is here suggested would be impossible; practically the words mean, “in the same spirit of noble self-denial, with the same freedom from avarice.” And as their inner spirit was the same, so also was their outward conduct; they walked in the same steps—Titus but following in the footsteps of Paul.

*The Apostle, Not the Apologist* (xii. 19-21).

19. This brief paragraph is intended to correct the impression which might very naturally arise in the minds of the Corinthians that Paul, in his vindication of himself (x. ff.) has been constituting them his judges, pleading, as it were, at their bar, and eager for their verdict. Nothing of the kind: God is his judge, and he is their apostle. **You have been thinking** (or with Westcott and Hort, *have you been thinking?*) **for a long time** (πάλαι better than πάλιν of A.V. again) **that it is to YOU that we are making our defence.** Certainly not: you are not my judges (1 Cor. iv. 3). **It is before God and in virtue of our fellowship with Christ that we speak**

20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

21 *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many

(cf. ii. 17). **And all those things** that I have said, **beloved**,—the tenderness flashes through the severity—**are** not in my own interests, and to secure a verdict of acquittal from you, but **for your upbuilding**. His vindication was not to defend himself, but to edify them; it was for their *edification* that the Lord gave him his authority (x. 8). In general, edification, upbuilding, is the great law of the church, determining the action of her officers, and regulating the conduct of her worship (1 Cor. xiv. 5, 12, 17, 26).

20. These verses (20, 21) show how sorely the Corinthians needed edification, and how little competent they were to pass judgment upon such a man as Paul. As Professor Denney aptly says, “The Corinthians had been seating themselves in imagination on the tribunal, and they are summarily set on the floor.” **For I am afraid that, perchance, when I come**,—it is now the *apostle* that speaks—I may find you not pure and peaceable, such as I would, and that I may be found by **you** (or less probably, “in your judgment”) not only such as I would not, but—more vigorously—such as **YE would not**, an administrator of discipline and chastisement (cf. x. 6, 1 Cor. iv. 21); **that perchance (there may) be found** (supply *εἰρεθῶσιν*) the spirit of **strife and jealousy, cases of angry outbursts** (plu.), **faction or intrigue** such as hired servants (*ἐριθοι*) might be guilty of, defamation of character whether by open **slander**, or secret **whispering, conceit, disorder**. These are all tempers or acts symptomatic of the party spirit (1 Cor. i. 10 f.) which was prejudicial to the peace and unity of the church, and insulting to God who was a God of order, not of *confusion* (1 Cor. xiv. 33).

21. But the character of the church was being imperilled by lust, no less than by discord, and this fear seems to lie even more heavily

which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

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upon the heart of Paul than the other (there is no qualifying πως after μή, “lest by any means,” as in the previous case) especially if we read with some MSS. though this is not necessary, ταπεινώσῃ (will humble) for ταπεινώσῃ (may). It is difficult to say whether the πάλιν (again) goes with come or may humble. It is no real objection to the former view that in the previous verse ἐλθόων stands alone, without πάλιν (simply having come); but probably the latter is the more correct. Paul fears another humiliation like that which he had experienced on his second visit; but even in his humiliation he recognizes the guiding and the disciplining hand of God, who is therefore “my God.” *I am afraid that, when I come, my God may again, as before, humble me in my relations to (πρὸς) you, by showing me the scanty fruit of my work, and that I may have to mourn over many of those who shall not have repented of their former sins of sexual impurity, and, in particular, fornication, and riotous lasciviousness, which they have committed.* Probably Alford is right in regarding “many of those who have sinned” as a mild expression for “the many who have sinned.” Who are “those who are now in a condition of having sinned (pf. ptc.) before”? Before what? Probably before their entrance into the church. The sexual sins and practices which Paul here glances at so mournfully (loose unions, perhaps concubinage, and such sins as are represented by 1 Cor. v.) were probably carried over into the Christian church by many who entered it. The suspicion receives some confirmation from xiii. 2, where “those who have sinned before” appear to stand in a class by themselves. Paul, with his pastoral heart, *mourns* over these sins and sinners, unlike the Corinthians, who showed their spiritual callousness by “not mourning” over them (1 Cor. v. 2). It is significant that the sins which Paul is afraid he will find, when he comes to Corinth, are sins of faction and lust. These are the two most prominent types of sin in the first epistle, and they must have been very characteristic of volatile and immoral Corinth. If Paul had been willing to defend his reputation and authority before any earthly tribunal, it was certainly not before

## CHAPTER XIII

1 THIS *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I

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men swayed by the spirit of partyism and social impurity. Men like these much needed all the "edification" that could be brought to bear upon them.

*The Final Appeal* (xiii. 1-10).

The note of authority, which had been vigorously struck in the last paragraph, becomes even more prominent and vigorous in this. He now goes beyond the expression of a fear that, when he came in person, they would find him not such as they wished: he says very definitely that he will not spare. His power will then be as obvious as his weakness had been. But, with his old tenderness, he soon passes from this to the expression of a prayer that their conduct will be so good and seemly that he will have no occasion to exercise his authority.

**I, 2. This is the third time that I am coming to you** (cf. xii. 14). This sentence, and the most natural interpretation of ver. 2, apart from other considerations, put it beyond all reasonable doubt that Paul had already been twice in Corinth. **At the mouth of two or (lit. and) three witnesses shall every word be established.** It is difficult to decide whether Paul, in thus citing Deuteronomy xix. 15, is playfully regarding his visits as the witnesses—the next, which was the third, being decisive—or whether he is seriously and solemnly asserting that the next time he comes, the whole situation will be impartially investigated and the truth established, at a formal trial. Perhaps, stern as the context is, the former is more in the manner of Paul. **To those**—the class already alluded to by the same word in xii. 21—who are living in their old sins, and **to all the rest** who look forward to my visit with a bad conscience, I have already said beforehand (*i.e.* forewarned) (in x. 6) and do now say beforehand (forewarn), **as on my**

write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare :

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

**second visit, (so) now also in my absence,** when I can only communicate by letter, **that, if I come again, I will not spare** (as he had spared before, in not coming, i. 23). What precisely this threat implies, is not quite certain—whether simply the stern exercise of spiritual authority, or some signal and miraculous punishment such as fell upon Elymas (Acts xiii. 11, cf. 1 Cor. v. 5). Probably the two things would not be quite distinct in the mind of Paul ; “wonders” were among the signs of an apostle (xii. 12).

**3, 4.** It is the scepticism of the Corinthians that drives Paul to this stern exercise of his authority ; it is necessary, in order to convince them that *Christ is speaking in him. I will not spare, seeing that you are seeking a proof of the Christ that speaks in me—the Christ who in relation to you, as you will find when I come, is not weak but powerful among you.* Paul’s words and acts will be so authoritative as to carry the conviction that Christ is speaking and working in and through him. Paul is indeed one with Christ, alike in his weakness and in his power. The weakness evidenced most terribly by the crucifixion, and the power manifested by the resurrection, have repeated themselves in the experience of Paul. As Jesus had been crucified, so he had been humbled (xii. 21) ; and as surely as Jesus had been raised to an endless (*ζῆ*, *He lives*) triumphant life, so surely would he *live*, inspired by the same *power of God*, and show the life that was in him by the authority he would wield. This is a passage that happily illustrates Paul’s mysticism ; he is conscious of sharing the weakness and the life of Christ. **For He was indeed crucified through weakness** (the weakness which issues in death Jesus shares with man ; in a sense this was then the source, *ἐκ*, of the

5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

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crucifixion), but now He lives through (*ἐκ*, source) the power of God who raised Him from the dead (Gal. i. 1). For we also, as is shown by our humiliating experiences (xii. 21, 9) are weak in (some MSS. read *with*) Him the crucified One, but with Him, the risen One, we shall, by the same power of God that raised Him, live and exhibit vigorous tokens of life and power in relation to you.

5, 6. The man who could write the last two verses is very conscious that *he* is in the faith, can offer proof (*δοκιμή*, ver. 3) and stand the test. The Corinthians would do well to turn their attention from him to themselves, and see whether *they* could stand the test. Throughout this passage, changes are rung on *δοκιμή* (proof), *δοκιμάζω* (to put to the proof), and *ἀδόκιμος* (having no proof, incapable of standing the test, reprobate) which it is unfortunately impossible to reproduce in English. Try **YOURSSELVES** (not *me*) whether you are living in the faith which saves the soul. *Faith* is hardly here the “objective Christian creed” (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 13), but we can see from such a passage how the way was prepared for this use of the word. Put **YOURSSELVES** to the proof. Or do you not know as to yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you ? except indeed, he adds, you are reprobates, unapproved, have failed in the test. Deplorable though the situation is in many of its phases, they are, in some real sense, a Christian church. Christ is present among them, and constitutes the ideal by which they must measure themselves. “They ought to recognize Christ as a power in themselves—unless indeed they, being counterfeit Christians, cannot recognize Him because He is not there” (Massie). And if Christ is really in and among them, if they themselves are not reprobates, they ought to have no difficulty in recognizing that Paul is no reprobate ; I hope you will recognize that **WE** (*ἡμεῖς*) are no reprobates. This may also be interpreted in a threatening sense : “when I come,

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil ; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong : and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent,

I will furnish you with proof enough of my apostolic authority. In the discipline that I will authoritatively enforce, you will see, I hope, plainly enough *proof* of the Christ that speaketh in me."

**7-10.** But Paul (unlike Jonah, cf. ch. iv.) is very much more concerned about their character than about his own reputation. He would infinitely rather find them repentant and virtuous, when he comes, than indulging in the sins which will give him an opportunity to assert his authority ; he even prays for this, caring nothing what may come of his reputation for authority. **Now we pray to God that you do no evil, not in order that WE (*ὑμεῖς*) may in that case appear approved** ; it is true that their attainments in virtue would redound to the credit of Paul their teacher ; that, however, is not his motive at all ; **but in order that YOU may act nobly, even though WE be as reprobates.** The virtue of the Corinthians will react doubly on Paul, it will leave him both "approved" and "unapproved" ; approved—because, under God, they owe that virtue to him ; unapproved, because he is now deprived of his opportunity to *prove* his authority (ver. 3) by severe discipline of them. But the latter motive does not weigh with Paul. **For we cannot do anything against the truth, but we can only act in behalf of the truth.** By *the truth* Paul apparently means here "the gospel" ; and this sentence enunciates the principle which governed all his action. He could do nothing prejudicial to the gospel, he could only do what would further its interests, and this he was prepared to do even when it meant the sacrifice of his reputation. Not only *prepared*, but *delighted* (*χαίρομεν*) : **for we are glad when WE are weak, without opportunity to assert our authority, and YOU are so strong in Christian character that such an assertion of my authority**

lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

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becomes unnecessary. And this we not only rejoice over, but pray for also ;—your restoration, amendment, perfecting. This is why, in my absence, I write these things, especially the last stern passage beginning with xii. 20, in order that, when I am present, I may not have to deal with you abruptly, *i.e. sharply*, and so that I may act in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for demolition (exactly as in x. 8). If Paul has to act sharply, it will be more like pulling down than building up, and so at least an apparent contravention of the spirit of that authority with which he was entrusted by Christ.

*Parting Injunctions and Benediction (xiii. 11-13).*

11, 12. In the concluding verses, the severity passes into a certain solemn gentleness ; finally, brethren, all the imperatives in ver. 11 except the first, quietly glance at the weaknesses of the Corinthian church : therefore, probably the first (*χαιρέτε*) should not be rendered *rejoice*, but *farewell*, though a Greek would hardly forget the original meaning of the word ; perhaps *fare ye well* would produce a somewhat similar impression in English. **Be perfected**—Paul had just prayed for this (ver. 9)—**be exhorted** (rather than *comforted*, though this is not impossible, cf. i. 7), with perhaps special reference to the exhortations that immediately follow : **be of the same mind**, **be at peace**—the curse of the Corinthian church, as of ancient Greek political life, was faction and strife (cf. 1 Cor. i. 10 f.). **And God, who is the God OF LOVE** will be with you, when *you* are at unity with one another, **and the God of PEACE will be with you**, when *you* are at peace with one another. The peace and love of the Corinthian church, as the letter shows, have been sadly imperilled, but **salute one another**.

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen.

---

with a holy kiss (1 Cor. xvi. 20) which will seal your unity and love again. All the saints in Macedonia, from which Paul is writing, acknowledge your unity as a Christian church, and **salute you.**

13. After all the strife, jealousy, and malice with which Paul has had to deal, especially towards the close of his letter, the full-toned benediction falls with wonderful force and beauty. It is through *the grace of Jesus* (cf. viii. 9) that Paul has learned of *the love of God*, and therefore the name of Jesus is significantly put first. This new life which came with Jesus is perpetuated in the church by the Spirit. If  $\pi\tau\varepsilon\nu\mu\alpha\tau\omega\zeta$  is a subjective genitive, like the other two, the fellowship or communion will be that which is produced among Christian men by the spirit; but if it be objective, it will mean participation in the holy spirit, and in His gracious gifts and operations. This benediction sweeps majestically from eternity to eternity. It contemplates the love of God rooted in the infinite past, realized in the historical Jesus, and perpetuating itself through all time by the spirit. In this passage (cf. Mat. xxviii. 19) we can see the Trinitarian doctrine taking shape. **The grace of the Lord Jesus (Christ), and the love of God, and the fellowship of the holy Spirit, be with you all—all,** including his malicious opponents; a very noble and wonderful ending.

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